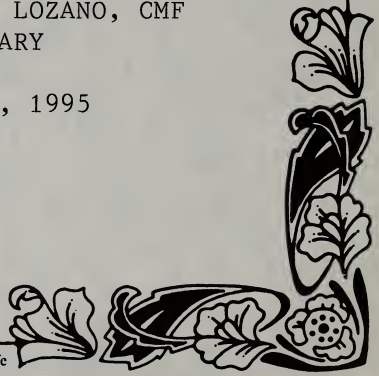
The Mistress of Novices

Donated
To The Library by

JOHN LOZANO, CMF
LIBRARY

June, 1995



© DEMCO, INC.—Archive Safe

The Catholic
Theological Union
LIBRARY
Chicago, Ill.

THE Mistress of Novices

INSTRUCTED IN HER DUTIES;

OR,

A METHOD OF DIRECTION

For the Use of Persons Charged with the Training of Souls in Christian and Religious Perfection.

By M. L'ABBÉ LEGUAY,

VICAR-GENERAL OF PERPIGNAN, FORMERLY DIRECTOR OF SEVERAL CONVENTS IN PARIS.

WITH THE APPROBATION OF

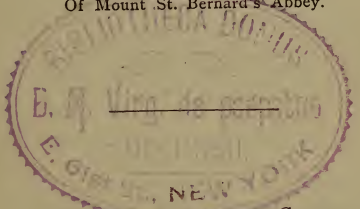
Mgrs. the Archbishop of Paris and the Bishop of Bayeux.

"The government of souls is the science of sciences."

TRANSLATED FROM THE SECOND EDITION,

BY THE REV. F. IGNATIUS SISK,

Of Mount St. Bernard's Abbey.

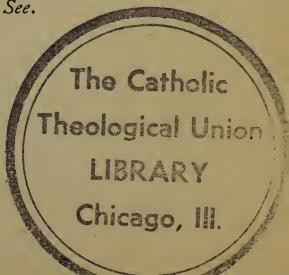


NEW YORK, CINCINNATI, CHICAGO:

BENZIGER BROTHERS,

Printers to the Holy Apostolic See.

1889.



DEDICATION.

Mount St. Bernard's 15th October 1874,
Feast of St. Teresa.

Dear Lady Abbess,

In publishing an English translation of a work, printed in French, and entitled, "La Maitresse des Novices eclairée sur ses Devoirs," I am induced to seek the favour of dedicating the result of my labours to you. It was solely through your repeated solicitations that I at length undertook and finished it. In this task, I have been influenced also by a strong sense of the necessity of a similar work, containing, as it does, so much solid instruction. If the future well-being of a Religious Community depends upon the spirit manifested by its junior members when under probation, it is almost impossible to estimate too highly the importance of the office of Mistress of Novices.

The difficulties and responsibility it involves, when discharged faithfully and conscientiously, are very numerous and great. Such a work as that which you recommended, will, it is hoped, be

of some utility in the many Noviciates of the Religious Communities that are daily increasing in England and Ireland for the promotion of the glory of God and the good of innumerable souls.

Having had some experience in the charge of Novices during several years, I feel convinced of the value of such guidance in the due performance of its onerous duties.

Accept, therefore, Dear Lady Abbess, my humble endeavours to second your zealous intentions, and, while thanking you for many past acts of kindness, may I ask to be sometimes remembered in the prayers of your pious community?

Long, indeed, shall I cherish the pleasing memory I feel of what I witnessed some years ago, at a critical period of my life, in the sacred precincts of Clare Abbey, where everything seemed to breathe the sweet and mortified spirit of their Saintly Founder.

I remain, dear Lady Abbess,
Your ever devoted and obliged
Servant in Jesus Christ,
Br. Ignatius Sisk, O. C.

To the Lady Abbess,
Clare Abbey, Darlington.

APPROBATION

OF HIS GRACE THE ARCHBISHOP OF PARIS.

Denis Augustus Affre, *by the Divine Mercy, and the favour of the Apostolic See, Archbishop of Paris.*

We have approved, and we do approve, by these present letters, of a work of religious instruction, having for title, "*The Mistress of Novices Instructed in her Duties,*" by Abbé Legnay, Honorary Canon of Bayeux, and Director of several Religious Communities in our Diocese.

We recommend it specially to Ecclesiastics who exercise the holy ministry in Communities, to Superiors of the said Communities, and to Mistresses of Novices, for whom it is particularly designed.

Given at Paris, under our signature, the seal of our arms, and the Counter-signature of our Secretary, the 27th December, 1841.

✠ Denis, Archbishop of Paris.

By command of Mgr. the Archbishop of Paris,

Eglee, Canon-Secretary.

APPROBATION

OF HIS LORDSHIP THE BISHOP OF BAYEUX.

The book, entitled "The Mistress of Novices Instructed in her Duties," published by M. L'Abbé Legnay, formerly Curé and Honorary-Canon of our Diocese, has appeared to us to state with clearness, precision, and method, the important duties which the Mistresses of Novices have to fulful towards those with whose care they are charged, in order to be trained to a Religious life; we cannot but applaud the wise and enlightened zeal of the pious author, and we earnestly recommend his work to the Religious Communities in our Diocese, being persuaded that it is calculated to do the greatest good among them.

✠ L. F., Bishop of Bayeux.

CONTENTS.

PAGE

Introduction 1

PART I.

What a Mistress of Novices ought to be, in order to fulfil with success the obligations which her office requires from her 7

CHAPTER I.

A Mistress ought to be to her Novices a perfect model of every virtue 7

ARTICLE

I.—On the Humility necessary for a Mistress of Novices 13
II.—On the Charity necessary for a Mistress of Novices 17
III.—Of the Meekness necessary for a Mistress of Novices 24
IV.—Of the Firmness necessary for a Mistress of Novices 29
V.—Of the Prudence necessary for a Mistress of Novices 33
VI.—On the Impartiality necessary for a Mistress of Novices 40
VII.—On the vigilance which a Mistress of Novices ought to possess 43

CHAPTER II.

Of the Knowledge necessary for a Mistress of Novices, and of the instruction to be given them 48

I.—Knowledge which is necessary for a Mistress in Dogma and Morality. Instructions which she has to give to her Novices 49
II.—Knowledge necessary for a Mistress on the Sacraments. Instructions which she ought to give her Novices on this point 54

ARTICLE PAGE

III.—Knowledge necessary for a Mistress, regarding the Vows, the Rules and the Constitutions in vigour in her Order. Instructions which she ought to give on this point 62

IV.—Knowledge necessary for a Mistress of Novices upon the means of conquering their passions and attaining the spiritual life. Instructions which she should give her daughters on this point 67

V.—Knowledge which a Mistress ought to possess of the interior life, and on the means of attaining it. Instruction she ought to give her novices on this point 70

PART II.

Rules of conduct which a Mistress of Novices ought to follow to train her daughters up in Christian and Religious virtues 73

CHAPTER I.

General Rules applicable to the direction of all Postulants and Novices 76

I.—The Mistress ought to endeavour to gain the confidence of her Novices, in order to induce them to open their interior to her. Means which she ought to employ to accomplish this object 76

II.—What are the limits at which a Mistress ought to stop, whether in the avowals her Novices may make to her of their own accord, or whether in the questions which she may judge appropriate to ask them 81

III.—The Mistress ought to maintain the most inviolable secrecy upon all that her Novices may confide to her relative to their interior 84

IV.—Method which a Mistress ought to follow in order to aid her Novices to triumph over their passions, and to succeed in the spiritual life 89

V.—How the Mistress ought to form her children in humility 92

VI.—How the Mistress ought to train her children to obedience 98

VII.—How a Mistress ought to form her children to poverty 103

ARTICLE PAGE

VIII.—How a mistress ought to train her spiritual children in chastity 106

IX.—How a Mistress ought to train her spiritual children to mutual charity, to regularity, silence, and an interior life 109

CHAPTER II.

Special Rules applicable for the direction of each Novice, according to her particular wants 111

I.—How the Mistress ought to direct the Novices who are still young and inexperienced 113

II.—How a Mistress of Novices ought to direct postulants who are more advanced in age, who have lived in the midst of the world, and know its dangers 116

III.—How the Mistress ought to guide those of her children who have had the happiness to preserve their baptismal innocence 120

IV.—How the Mistress ought to guide those who have not had the happiness of preserving their baptismal innocence 124

V.—How the Mistress ought to conduct herself towards the Novices who are disturbed by scruples ... 130

VI.—How the Mistress ought to conduct herself towards those of her spiritual children who have disquiets about the confessions which they have made in the world 136

VII.—How the Mistress ought to direct Novices of a melancholy character 143

VIII.—How the Mistress ought to direct Novices of a phlegmatic character 146

IX.—How the Mistress ought to direct Novices who are of a sanguine temperament 148

X.—How the Mistress ought to direct her Novices, who are of a bilious constitution 151

XI.—How the Mistress ought to direct her spiritual children who are of an intriguing character ... 155

XII.—How the Mistress ought to direct Novices of a curious character 159

XIII.—How a Mistress should act towards Novices who are inclined to carry reports 164

XIV.—How a Mistress ought to conduct herself towards Novices who are often strongly tempted, when they consult her to know if they can go to Holy Communion 168

XV.—How the Mistress ought to conduct herself towards Novices who are sick 173

APPENDIX.

PAGE

How the Mistress ought to form a just opinion of the vocation of her children, and what account she ought to render to the chapter when they are proposed for the habit or profession 178

Notice for the use of Mistresses upon the obligation imposed upon Religious of reciting the Divine Office, and on the manner in which they ought to fulfil that obligation 184

1. Obligations imposed upon Religious respecting this point. Circumstances in which these obligations cease or are modified 184

2. In what order and at what time the Divine Office ought to be recited. Integrity and continuity necessary 188

3. Of the attention and intention necessary in reciting the Divine Office, and of the attitude we ought to preserve during that time 195

Notice for the use of Mistresses of Novices on Indulgences 200

Method of Mental Prayer for the use of the Mistresses and the Novices 204

INTRODUCTION.

Of all the offices that can be confided to a Religious, in her monastery, the most important, after that of the superioress, is that of mistress of novices. It is through the care of such mistresses that Religious Congregations are renewed and perpetuated; it is through them that the Religious spirit, a spirit of self-denial, penance, love and fervour, of which holy founders have given such bright examples, is regenerated, is preserved and transmitted from hand to hand, through the different ages and revolutions, of which they are the witnesses.

The office of mistresses is as difficult to discharge as it is important; its duty is to train, during a noviciate, young persons who leave the world; who, too often, have no idea of true virtue, whose souls are still disordered from the effects of the deep and mortal wounds, which they have received in the midst of combats out of which they have not always escaped victorious. Novices have to be taught to know themselves, to offer violence

to their own nature, to triumph over their passions, to acquire Christian and Religious virtues.

The dogmas and the morality of the Gospel have to be taught to persons who have often forgotten even the letter of the Catechism, which they had learnt without understanding. The evangelical counsels have to be explained to them; the Rules and Constitutions, which define the nature and determine the extent and consequences of the vows, have to be made known to them.

The novices have to be taught how base, how grovelling everything is, that constitutes the life of the senses, and their duty in avoiding it; and how great, noble, sublime and consoling, an interior and spiritual life is; and the novices must have the way pointed out to them, that leads to this divine life; they should be introduced to it, and be fortified in it.

This difficult work has to be set in operation in a noviciate, composed of persons who have received from the Creator different gifts, though with an unequal measure: who present to the practised eye a thousand different shades, of temper, of character, and inclinations; who cannot be conducted to the desired result, by the same way, and within the lapse of the same time; and who, in fact, cannot be raised to the same degree of perfection.

The Mistress of Novices has, then, to exercise, among her subordinates, a species of apostleship; she must instruct, direct, and give decisions on every point when consulted; she must be the light of her noviciate. What knowledge must she not possess, of dogma and morals, of the duties of the Religious state, of the spiritual life, of the human heart, of the maladies which burden it, and the remedies which are proper for healing it, of tempers and of characters? What a combination of wisdom, of prudence, of meekness, of charity, of patience and longanimity, is necessary to discharge successfully so delicate a mission?

And, even with all this knowledge and all these virtues, how many dangers are there not to be avoided by a mistress, who has at heart her own salvation and her own perfection! Dangers on the side of pride and presumption, that may drag her into the most deplorable disorders; on the side of timidity and indecision, that may paralyse her talents, her knowledge, and all her happy dispositions, and render them useless; on the side of dissipation and natural activity, that may destroy in her all interior spirit, make her forget God and her own sanctification, and precipitate her into the abyss.

What are we to conclude from these considera-

tions? Ought, then, a Religious, who has her salvation at heart, to shun an employment so difficult, that involves so fearful a responsibility? She ought never to desire nor seek it; she could not do so without a culpable rashness: she ought to accept it when it is imposed on her, this is a rigorous result of her vow of obedience; she ought to accept it with confidence, because it is God who imposes it on her, through the interposition of her superioresses, and because, when imposing a burden, God always grants the graces and necessary strength to bear it in a way conformable to His designs. But when this burden is imposed upon her, the mistress ought to labour with zeal in acquiring the virtues and knowledge necessary to bear it worthily; and from what source will she be able to acquire them?

It is here that a necessity is felt for a work adapted to the special wants of mistresses; a work, clear, short, methodical, which they can read, meditate, and search into, and in which they can see, in a precise manner, what they ought to be, the knowledge they ought to possess, the conduct they ought to adopt, under the various circumstances in which they may be situated, in the government of those under their care. Now, such a work does not exist. Each, in his profession, has his training and instruction; the mistress

alone, who is engaged in the greatest of professions, has none, at least appropriate to her position and wants; for it is easy to understand how totally insufficient is the advice she may receive from a superioress or a director, however enlightened they may be supposed to be; advice which only reaches her ears piecemeal, so to speak, without system or connexion; passing advice, which speedily escapes her memory, and which she only collects with difficulty, when it is most necessary. It is this necessity which has determined us to undertake a work, the fruit of which we offer to mistresses of novices.

We have extracted and put together, whether by way of quotation or that of analysis, the scattered counsels which the most skilful masters give in their writings, to mistresses, superioresses, and directors of souls, in all that is applicable for the guidance of novices; we have added to them the reflections suggested to us by our own experience; and from the whole, we have endeavoured to draw up a body of doctrine, clear, simple, and methodical, calculated to inform mistresses of novices as to their duties.

We have divided this work into two parts: In the first, we treat of the virtues and knowledge which a mistress ought to possess, in order to fulfil, with success, the obligations entailed upon

her by the office she holds. And in the second, we mark out the general and particular rules which she ought to follow, in the direction of those confided to her care.

THE MISTRESS OF NOVICES INSTRUCTED IN HER DUTIES.

PART I.

WHAT A MISTRESS OF NOVICES OUGHT TO BE, IN ORDER TO FULFIL WITH SUCCESS THE OBLIGATIONS WHICH HER OFFICE REQUIRES FROM HER.

CHAPTER I.

A MISTRESS OUGHT TO BE TO HER NOVICES A PERFECT MODEL OF EVERY VIRTUE.

We have said, it is through the care of mistresses of novices that Religious Congregations are renewed and perpetuated; it is through them that the Religious spirit, a spirit of self-denial, of penance, of love, fervour and zeal for perfection, of which holy founders have given the example, are preserved and transmitted from hand to hand, amid the different generations which succeed each other in communities; now mistresses of novices have not a surer way to attain this happy result in the discharge of their duties, than good example, which, by the consent of all, is the most eloquent form of preaching.

Jesus Christ, at His coming on the earth to draw man away from the vices which degraded him, and instil into him the practice of Christian virtue, began Himself by putting every Christian virtue into practice, and it was only afterwards that He began to teach. He came to preach humility, and He lowered Himself so as to be born in a stable; poverty, and He manifested Himself deprived of everything, laid on straw, and wrapped in poor swaddling clothes; mortification, and He suffered the rigours of cold, hunger and thirst; flight of honours, and He remained concealed from the eyes of men, and followed a mean profession; chastity, and He led a most innocent and irreproachable life; meekness and patience, and He supported without complaint the most crying outrages; pardon of injuries, and He prayed for His executioners, &c.

The apostles, who were destined to continue the sublime ministry of the Saviour of men, began themselves by following Him step by step; then, addressing themselves to the people, they said: "*Be ye imitators of us, as we are of Jesus Christ;*" and the people, persuaded by their example, became converted in crowds, and imitated them.

What an authority over novices confided to her care, will not a virtuous mistress possess, who is a faithful imitatrix of Jesus Christ, her Spouse and her Model, who devotedly follows in herself His sublime example, in reproducing all His virtues; who can say with confidence, as well as the apostle of nations, "*I live, not I, but Jesus Christ liveth in me;*" who, faithful to all the duties of her state, can add with the same apostle: "*Be ye fol-*

lowers of me, as I am of Jesus Christ?" She would have the right to command everything, and correct everything, without fear of being contradicted; her words, dictated by a profound conviction, would carry persuasion into all hearts; the virtues with which she is adorned, and the sanctity with which she is penetrated, would pass from her heart into that of her novices, who, thus nourished with her superabundance, would become themselves saints, adorned with her virtues.

Add to this the fire, truly Divine, with which God would animate the zeal of such a mistress; the admirable efficacy which He would communicate to her words, the abundant benedictions which He would pour upon all her labours, the privileged graces which at her prayer He would impart with profusion throughout all her noviciate, and you will have an idea of the good she can do.

And, without this powerful aid of God, which He only bestows on fidelity, what good could a mistress accomplish among the novices who are entrusted to her? "For, we *sow and we water*," says the great apostle, when speaking of the painful labours of his ministry, "*but God alone gives the increase.*" "*If the Lord Himself labours not at the building of an edifice*," says equally the royal prophet, "*they labour in vain that build it; unless the Lord keep the city, he watcheth in vain that keepeth it.*" Now, how could God give the increase, if, instead of watering the earth, she who has the mission to do so drains, by her infidelities, the source of the celestial dew, and only spreads upon it corrosive substances, capable of destroying the seed, or stifling its germ? How

could God, to raise an edifice of sanctity, make use of an impure and unfriendly hand, accustomed to overturn and destroy what He wishes to raise? How could He watch at the gates of the city, with a soul in familiar correspondence with the enemies who conspire its loss, and who is accustomed to introduce them there? No, God will never bless the efforts of a mistress who possesses not the virtues of her state.

Were we but to examine the position of a mistress of novices, who is not to them a model of virtue, in a human point of view, we may confidently assert that she would produce no fruit. In fact, either she will be contented to assume the exterior of virtue, in order to have the right to impose its practice on them, or she will inflict a burden on them, which she herself does not bear. If she exhorts them to virtues, the exercise of which she neglects, of what authority will be the exhortations which she contradicts by her example? "Were she capable," as Collet says, "of speaking the language of the angels, she might rely that she will never succeed." Youth naturally takes a pleasure in imitating, and, if it is certain that it imitates nobody more than those who are placed over it, it is still more certain that it never imitates them with more facility than when they give examples of tepidity, indolence, and relaxation; discourse edifies, example destroys. What! say, at least tacitly, a crowd of novices, she who directs us is repeating to us continually that we must be regular, and she always comes the last to the exercises! That we must be poor, and she is not willing to want anything, and her cell is

adorned like a church! That we must be faithful to silence, and she is speaking incessantly, even in the regular places! That we must obey without a murmur, and she does not obey, and expressions of murmuring continually fall from her mouth.

If the mistress contents herself with assuming the exterior of virtue, in order to have the right to impose the practice of it on others, her conduct will be only a revolting hypocrisy, which will not pass unperceived by the quicksighted eyes of her novices; this virtue of command will only cause distrust and contempt. "Moreover, it would be something," says Father Beaufils, "if this hypocrisy did not give the lie to itself; for God, who is essentially the Spirit of Truth, will never concur in such deceptions. Whited sepulchres may dazzle for a time, but what they contain is soon discovered. Sooner or later, some contradiction in conduct will be observed, that will betray the disguise of a hypocritical soul, for she cannot always put a restraint on herself; or, to speak more clearly, she is unwilling to submit to restraint, save at certain times and on certain points. She may indeed disguise from herself the faults into which she falls, the defects to which she is subject, but she will not equally succeed in disguising them from the eyes of others, who are as maliciously inclined to know her as she in her self-love is desirous not to be known; and where is there more shrewdness than in monasteries to discover what dissimulation endeavours to conceal? A mistress, who is not a model of virtue, cannot, then, even humanly speaking, do any

good among her novices. Nay, I say more, she will be unto them a scandal and a stumbling-block."

"Would a Captain," says Beaufils, "though a skilful commander, be listened to, who would take his repose while his soldiers are in action and undergoing the fatigue of the day, and who would seek a shelter for himself while others are fronting the peril? Would such a one perform any great exploit?" Exhort, urge, use efforts to have order maintained in your noviciate; if you exonerate yourself from the obligations that are placed upon you, the negligent and the imperfect will require no better pretext to sanction them in their relaxation; they will take, as the rule of their conduct, the conduct which you exhibit; if they fall into any disorder, they will consider themselves safe from any reproach, as they with difficulty believe that they need fear you will hold that a crime in them which you yourself so easily commit. Thus all bonds will become loosened among the novices; silence, regularity, obedience, will fall into disuse; piety and interior spirit will disappear; vocations that had become vacillating will vanish; subjects in disgust will either leave the monastery, or will only remain in it to be a cross and a scandal. Let us then repeat, and may our words be heard and understood by all those to whom the charge of novices is assigned; a mistress, to correspond with the designs of God over her, and do any good among her novices, must be to them a model of every virtue.

But as some virtues are specially necessary for

mistresses of novices, we shall speak of them in the following articles.

ARTICLE I.

On the humility necessary for a Mistress of Novices.

The higher you are, the more humble ought you to be in all things. Mistresses of novices ought often to meditate on this oracle of the Holy Ghost. They are high, they are elevated, in consequence of the important employment which is confided to them; they are representatives of Jesus Christ in the midst of their novices; they exercise among them a sort of priesthood. They can say, in a certain sense, what St. Paul said of himself and his fellow-labourers: "*God hath placed on us the ministry of reconciliation; we are, therefore, ambassadors for Christ, God, as it were, exhorting by us.*" It is by us, it is by our mouths, that He wills to speak to souls, to touch hearts and lead them to perfection.

Mistresses are, in like manner, great, elevated by reason of the veneration and homage with which their employment surrounds them; their subordinates never call them except by the name of mother; they honour them, and venerate them as such. Does a mistress make her appearance, the novices stand up quickly as a mark of respect; does she address them, all ears are open to listen to her, and collect her words as an oracle; does she give any signal, all eyes are fixed on her lips, to read in them her desire and will; does she

command, immediately all feet are in motion, and hands are at work to put her order into execution; does she give a reprimand, looks are cast down, knees are bent, and the humiliation or penance is accepted in silence.

Yes, mistresses are great and elevated, but the more they are raised up the more necessary is humility for them. It is necessary:

1. Because, without this virtue, they are exposed to the most deplorable falls. "The highest mountains," says Rodriguez, "are the most exposed to the beating of the winds; the highest edifices are those which need the deepest foundations." Mistresses of novices, being universally respected and honoured, as we have just said; being considered as oracles, like the apostles; as saints that sanctify all who approach them, being thereby raised above all that surrounds them, have need of being very solidly grounded in virtue, and, above all, in the virtue of humility; otherwise, they will be upset by the wind of pride. "Few persons," says Rodriguez again, "have a head sufficiently strong to stand in a place so elevated without being dazzled. How many, through want of humility," adds the same author, "have fallen from the elevation in which they were? How many have we seen take, as it were, an elevated flight, like eagles, and then become, as it were, birds of the night, through their pride?" Sacred history is full of frightful examples on this point; may they not be for many useless admonitions?

The mistress who is not grounded in a profound humility, is in danger of falling into a sort of

pride which is most dangerous, viz., spiritual pride, by which we render ourselves guilty of theft, by appropriating the goods of another contrary to the will of him to whom it belongs, that is to say, the glory which belongs only to God, which God has particularly reserved to Himself, and which He declares in Isaiah *He will not give to another.* St. Francis feared so much to fall into this pride, that he often said to God, "*Lord, if You will favour me with Your gifts, be Yourself the guardian of them, for I distrust myself; I am a great thief, who would make a bankrupt of You.*" A mistress ought to walk with the same fear; to maintain herself in a continual self-distrust, to refer faithfully to God the homage which is paid to her, and all the good which is accomplished through her exertions.

2. A mistress of novices has need of a profound humility, because, without humility, she can do no good. What secures the success of a mistress in her office is, properly speaking, neither natural talents, nor science, nor even experience, which, however, is very useful, as well as the gifts of nature. These are only means of which God makes use, when He wills and as He wills, to attain His ends, but for which He can substitute a thousand others at His choice. Means, the most imperfect, the most insignificant in appearance, may serve Him with as much success as the most distinguished and perfect in the eyes of men. This is most admirably explained to us by St. Paul, who says, "*The foolish things of the world hath God chosen, that He may confound the wise; and the weak things of the world hath God*

chosen, that He may confound the strong." And why has He so acted? *That no flesh should glory in His sight.* That, as it is written, "*He that glorieth may glory in the Lord.*"

It is, then, God alone, by His grace, who is the principle of the success of men; and without this grace, He has declared to us, in a formal manner, we can do absolutely nothing. But, to whom does God communicate His grace? He does not, certainly, communicate it to the proud; "he is," says He, "an object of horror and abomination in His eyes; He resists his advances, He paralyses his efforts, He casts him down, He confounds, in fine, He crushes him, if he is not converted and does not do penance."

But he to whom God is pleased to communicate His grace, is the humble of heart, formed in the school of Jesus Christ His Son; He communicates it to him in abundance, and, as it were, by torrents; He enlightens him, He instructs him, He "*causes to proceed from his mouth words of wisdom like a flood,*" says the Scripture; He ennobles his heart, He warms his zeal, He blesses and fructifies all his proceedings, and makes him fly from success to success; He is incessantly engaged in bestowing virtue on the humble, as He once did on the apostles, and since, on the Augustines, the Ambroses, the Benedicts, the Francises of Assissium, the Theresas, the Ignatiuses, the Francises of Sales, the Vincents of Paul, and so many others.

It is then indispensable to a mistress of novices to be grounded solidly in humility, because, if she does not possess that virtue, she runs the greatest

danger of losing herself, and because, without this virtue, she will never accomplish any good among the novices who may be confided to her, and she will have to render to God a terrible account of her charge.

A wise mistress ought to draw, from the considerations which we have just made, three maxims, which will be for her a powerful aid in the exercise of her duties.

The first is, that she will obtain success in proportion as her humility is the deeper.

The second is, that she must place all her confidence in God, and never be discouraged at the sight of her own feebleness and misery.

The third is, that she ought to entertain a continual distrust of herself, and only attribute her success to God, who is its sole principle, and who should be its sole end.

ARTICLE II.

On the Charity necessary for a Mistress of Novices.

The greater part of the novices who enter into a Community, to make a probation there, are imbued with the maxims of the world, are accustomed to follow their own judgment, to do their own will, to search after whatever pleases them, to shun whatever is distasteful to them, to lead a life according to nature; and their virtues consist too often in practices that are external. It is not an easy thing, as we have already observed, to train such persons to the fulfilment of the evangelical

counsels, to humility, to obedience, to mortification, to poverty, to love of solitude and silence, to a spiritual and interior life; in a word, to renounce themselves and to carry the cross after our Saviour! If, after the words of a holy Pope, the government of souls is the science of sciences, it may be said that the government of this class of souls is the most difficult of all. Now one of the most essential virtues in a mistress of novices, in order to discharge that duty with success, is charity.

"Begin by gaining the hearts of the people," wrote St. Xavier to those of his brethren who were labouring with him, under his direction, in the conversion of the Indies and Japan; "afterwards, you will do what you wish with their souls." It is thus by gaining the hearts of her novices that the mistress must commence. The greater part of men are led by the heart; it is there we must place the rudder; and when the impulse is once given in that direction, all else obeys with facility, and follows the direction which we wish to give it.

"Our heart is so formed," says F. Lafiteau, "that it is checked by indifference, and opens itself to the friendship which is shown to us, and to the charity of which we experience the effects; there are few who resist for a long time an affection which is constant, or the testimony of a true tenderness."

Let a mistress adopt, before all, towards her novices, the feelings of a mother; let her consider them as children of predilection, whom our Lord has confided to her, in order to purify their hearts and souls, and cause them to be born unto

grace; to elevate them even to perfection, and thus prepare for Jesus Christ His Son spouses worthy of Him.

Let her provide with care, and without fearing any trouble, for all their wants, both corporal and spiritual; let her nurse the sick with zeal, let her fortify the weak, let her take care of those whose health is good; let her console those who are afflicted, let her sustain those who are wavering, and raise those who are falling; in a word, let her make herself all to all, in order to gain all to Jesus Christ. Is there any novice who can resist such goodness, such solicitude, such devotedness and charity? In following this path, a mistress will infallibly succeed in obtaining the conquest over all hearts; and when once she possesses them, she will be able to mould them like soft wax, which is susceptible of every shape; she will lead them by ways that are the roughest, and the steepest, and they will take a pleasure in following her through them; whilst by dryness and rigidity she will have obtained nothing but sacrifices snatched through fear, and which will not have rendered them more generous or more virtuous.

Not only is charity in a mistress an assured mode of doing good among her novices, but it is also a duty.

"After good example," says Beaufils, "that we must give to persons whom we govern, I see nothing more important than charity, which we owe them; a charity stronger, more tender, more comprehensive and more perfect in all regards, than that which the generality of the Religious themselves owe to one another. It is by this mark

that we must distinguish a good pastor from those who have only the name, and the good mistresses from those who have but the name without having their feelings. It is they who are to make good the word of the Son of God, by aiding those to find the hundredfold of this life who have abandoned the world, and all they possessed; not the hundred-fold of wealth and temporal goods which they despised, but the hundredfold of a good which they did not renounce, when they abandoned all others; I mean that of love and tenderness for their neighbour: so that a mistress holds to them the place of father, mother, brethren and sisters; so that, in a certain sense, they might say of her what our Saviour said of him who does the will of His heavenly Father; "*he is My brother, and My sister, and mother.*" It is for this spiritual mother to supply for the benevolence, the affection, and tenderness of parents according to the flesh: it is for her to anticipate the regrets to which flesh and blood give rise, the remembrance of caresses and proofs of love which they have received from those to whom they owe their birth, in making them find again, with advantage, all they had lost in their regard. Novices separated from their relatives are regarded as orphans, and would be so in effect, if God, in the person of a charitable mistress, did not give them a powerful protectress, who might be a protection to them, a consolation and a support. They have always, in truth, a Father, who is in heaven, whom they invoke as the other faithful, and an immortal Father, who will never be wanting to them; but this heavenly Father imposes on those whom He places here

below in His stead, that paternal care which we look for from Him.

The mistress of novices has to fulfil, in a worthy manner, so high a mission; she has never to give occasion to those under her care to turn their minds towards the world, to seek there a succour that is refused them in the house of the most powerful and generous of masters. Let them be able, on the contrary, to say that, far from having lost anything by changing their state, they experience every day how much a love founded upon a charity that is really spiritual and supernatural, is preferable to that with which nature alone inspires our mortal parents.

A wise mistress should, then, accomplish the promises of our Divine Saviour, reflect honour on the Gospel, and not give room for those whom she directs, to think and to say that all the pretended advantages of the Religious state, which are so highly praised, are only pious exaggerations, snares laid for credulity, and that the sacred name of mother, with which she is honoured, expresses less what she is than what she ought to be.

"Do not draw down upon yourself such painful reproaches," continues the father already cited, "remember always that, in quality of head of the noviciate that you govern, you hold the place of God, you are clad with His authority, the depositary of His rights; but take care that, of all His Divine qualities, you do not exercise only His power and His justice; forget not that His goodness is, of all His perfections, that which is dearest to His paternal heart, and that it is the per-

fection which you ought principally to imitate. *Put ye on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, benignity, humility, modesty, patience.* Behold the intensity of the love of God for men. He carries them in His arms, He has written them in His hands; He is not repulsed by their defects, He pardons them their faults, He feeds and protects them; He regards their interests as His own, and deems Himself wounded, as in the apple of the eye, if the least injury is inflicted on them. Imitate His tenderness, adopt His sentiments, or else withdraw from performing His functions and holding His place.

The charity of a mistress should not be confined to feelings and thoughts, but it ought to extend itself to effects, and be kind and amiable. "Do not only esteem," says St. Bernard, "in the office which you discharge, the power which it gives you to contribute to the happiness of others. It is not a great happiness," adds he, "merely to be able to command, but it is a great misfortune not to make oneself useful when we command." Labour, then, without ceasing, for the good of those, the care of whom the heavenly Father has consigned to you; assist them, render them services, give them pleasure when occasion offers, and season all you do by performing it in a manner more obliging, if possible, than the favour itself. Let your attention be continually devoted to knowing their wants, what they may require for food, clothing and lodging, or what may contribute to re-establish their health or preserve it. Wait not, in order to provide for these wants, until they make them known to you; study them your-

self, and anticipate even their desires. It is rendering a favour doubly precious, when we spare the trouble of asking it. There are persons who are timid or discreet to an excess, that will resolve rather to suffer than risk making themselves importunate; there are others who are mortified, whom a spirit of penance will cause to conceal and suppress in silence their most urgent wants; there are proud and fiery characters, who will prefer to deprive themselves of necessary comforts, or procure them for themselves by illicit means, rather than lower themselves by asking to obtain them. A charity which is attentive and forestalling remedies all this.

And say not that the Religious state, being one of self-denial, it is not wrong that there should be found in it occasions for patience and mortification; this may be true, but it is not for you to cause it to happen; there is occasion enough for suffering without your contributing to it. If it is zeal for the perfection of inferiors that restrains the charity of those who are placed over them, it is a false zeal, which is not according to knowledge. Virtue and perfection do not command each other, they persuade; moreover, virtues are not incompatible with one another; and if one must yield to another, it is the least perfect that ought to give way to that which is more so. Is it a true zeal to divest oneself of all compassion, to give room for just discontent, to put weak virtue to trials under which it is most certainly foreseen that it will succumb? We ask of God not to lead us into temptation; and we, who, holding His place, ought to adopt His sentiments expose

those who are under our direction to the most powerful and painful temptations, without being in a condition, like Him, to give them the strength to resist them; is this reasonable?

ARTICLE III.

Of the Meekness necessary for a Mistress of Novices.

Jesus Christ, who is a perfect Model for mistresses of novices, gives them, in every part of His conduct, an example of that meekness which is necessary to succeed in the performance of the duties of their office. "He takes," says Beaufils, "the name of lamb, and He displays its patience and gentleness; an enemy to sin, He came not to punish it, but to take it away from the world; He seems to neglect the just to call sinners. *The bruised reed He does not crush, and the smoking flax He does not quench.*" Of all the divine qualities, that which He had most at heart for us to imitate, was His humility and meekness, virtues which always accompany each other. *Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of heart.* They have appeared in all His conduct in regard to sinners; the woman who was a sinner, the woman taken in adultery, Zacheus, and the publicans, are striking examples of it. Not even does He make an exception in the case of the traitor Judas, whom He only endeavours to gain by marks of an unheard-of meekness, giving him the sweet name of friend, at the moment in which the perfidious apostle consummates against Him his sacrilegious

attempt. It is the spirit of the new law, a law of grace and love; and it is in accordance with that spirit that the apostle exhorts his coadjutors in the holy ministry to employ meekness in corrections and punishments. "Let the masters of the world," says he, "let the profane render themselves formidable in order to ameliorate them; they cannot act better towards those *who have the spirit of bondage in fear;* but you, who are guided according to the spirit, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, act not in this manner; employ only advice blended with meekness, towards those who infringe the law."

If mistresses of novices adopt another line of conduct, it is not, doubtless, through contempt for examples and authorities so worthy of respect, but it is because it costs nature something to comply with it. They must, for this, be dead to themselves, humble, gentle, compassionate, and charitable; instead of which often we love only to domineer; we are harsh, we are wanting in feeling, we only wish to be feared; we concern ourselves but little as to the effects produced by our inconsiderate rigour; let it agitate minds, let it sour hearts, let it multiply faults by adding rebellion to formal disobedience; it is an affair of the guilty, say they, and not ours; it is for them to suffer since they have merited it, since they have not avoided what has drawn upon them the just punishments of which they complain! We must reserve our meekness for those whose life is without reproach, whereas the others would do nothing but abuse it. They will fear us if they cannot love us, and it is also better that they

should fear us, than think we fear them. Frivolous pretexts, which can only deceive ill-regulated minds; odious maxims, which may be adopted by tyrants, but which are unsuitable to persons who should be guided by the spirit of Religion, who bear the name of mothers, and who ought to possess their feelings.

To speak in general, it is then meekness which we must begin by employing; we are never authorized in having recourse to violent remedies, save in an extremity, and when we have no better method to adopt. Meekness always produces its effect when we have to deal with reasonable minds and good hearts. As the question at first will be to inform them wherein they have done wrong, and to obtain an avowal of their faults, we can easily attain our end, when we know how to gain their confidence and win their affection. Truth, though distasteful, makes itself loved everywhere, when it is not armed with rigour; when an amiable and engaging mind and manner have prepared the way for it, and when they have softened down what is bitter; we love it, when she who affords us the knowledge of it knows how to make us love it. It is then that our faults displease us, and not the remonstrances and admonitions which discover them to us. All that admonitions, which are seasoned with sweetness, produce, is to inspire gratitude for her who gives them, and the desire to show it to her, by trying to draw from them the profit which she had occasion to expect.

"That firmness which meekness does not temper and moderate," says Collet, "savours more of humour than of virtue; it becomes bitterness and

harshness; we are ourselves very imperfect, and we would that another, who has only been a neophyte for a few days, should be without imperfections. We only speak to her in a rough manner; we do not picture virtue under the forms that render it amiable. You would suppose that it was intended to persuade her that Wisdom had fixed her abode in a land which devoured its inhabitants: without any previous advice, or at least without any of those admonitions which charity and tenderness dictate, every fault receives on the spot its own punishment; a second is still more severely chastised; soon afterwards, we regard as incorrigible a person whom patience, courtesy, and a kind manner could have corrected. For, in fine, it is rare that the heart, if it is not greatly spoiled, does not listen to the language of the heart; and still more rare, that it should not listen to it when piety alone inspires it to speak.

I know that mistresses who act thus have the best intentions in the world, and that in reality they only seek the glory of God and the beauty of His house. But, in commending the substance of their zeal, I cannot approve of its forms; by means of this zeal, which has less connection with that of our Saviour than that of the children of thunder, a young person, in whom there is more of vivacity than of ill-will, finds herself disconcerted. Her heart is embittered and murmurs, her wound gangrenes every day; wherever she goes she only finds an austere countenance and a forbidding look. In fine, she makes her choice, and goes and amuses herself in the world, at the expense of the cloister, for the vexations she has experienced;

severity has destroyed her, a considerate kindness would have saved her.

We read in the life of St. Bernard that he showed himself at first very severe towards his Religious. "He had not sufficient regard for human weakness," says the author of his life, "so that several of his brethren, who otherwise were very humble and docile to his admonitions, began to fall into discouragement." Bernard acknowledged his fault, and to punish himself for it condemned himself to a long silence. Having renounced his first severity, he became full of sweetness towards all his Religious. He followed the maxim so often repeated in his works, that a superior ought to govern rather as a father than command as a master; he enjoined nothing on others which he did not first himself put into practice. If he rebuked any lukewarm monk, or if he imposed any penance upon him, he acted with so much tenderness that it could be easily seen that he suffered more from the compassion which he had for the guilty party, than he could have had from the confusion or the pain that might have happened to him from the punishment; he would have shared both one and the other with him. In his exhortations he compared himself to a mother; he called his disciples his eyes, his bowels and his heart; in the tender effusions of his soul he seemed to pour out honey and manna; "and if grief could of itself," says a great prelate, "make homilies and write books, it would express itself as St. Bernard." The fruit of such conduct was that those who had been at first tempted to discouragement, ran at length with a holy joy in the ways of perfection, and that

Clairvaux seemed changed into a paradise; upwards of 700 monks might be seen to fly at the least signal of the will of St. Bernard, and obey him as an angel sent from heaven. Experience had taught him, as he himself declares, that we do no good when others are not governed by us with a spirit of meekness. If it is impossible to please God without faith, it is not less impossible to gain the hearts of men or guide them well, without meekness and sweetness. There is no one who does not desire to have for a superior a person who, through goodness and humility, places himself beneath the whole world; we obey with pleasure, we anticipate, we willingly go beyond what is prescribed, when love and gentleness command

ARTICLE IV.

Of the firmness necessary for a Mistress of Novices.

If meekness is necessary for a mistress, firmness is not less so. "Meekness alone," says Collet, "does not inflict less evil than pure and simple rigidity." If one degenerates into harshness, the other degenerates into indolence or weakness; it passes over all, it dissembles all, it pardons all; often it tries even not to see, in order to spare the displeasure of making reproofs, which are always painful to a good heart, but which are not, however, the less necessary. By reason of such negligent conduct, youth becomes licentious; there is no longer any silence, no longer any work, no longer

spiritual reading, which should be made in that spirit of recollection and attention, without which they become useless. Soon a whole noviciate is no longer anything but a school of dissipation; piety at first begins to languish in it, then it gradually becomes extinguished; the term of their novice-ship advances, the profession is made, and would to God that it may not prove as fatal to those who receive it as to those who make it!

A wise firmness, a firmness blended with sweetness and charity, is then indispensable in a mistress. "Man," says Beaufils, after the Scripture, "is inclined to evil from the moment at which he comes to the use of his reason. Everything leads him to vice and withdraws him from virtue; a slave to his passions, and an idolator of himself, he has only to follow his inclinations, and all his steps will be so many falls and disorders. What remedy is there for so great an evil, except to deny himself, to fight with himself, and to renounce himself? But how must he, for this purpose, find enough courage and strength in a source that is defiled and corrupted? Who will love himself enough to be able thus to hate himself? It is requisite, then, that others should make up for it, that they should employ for us, in spite of ourselves, a rigour which we cannot resolve to exercise against ourselves; that, without hearing our complaints, they have only a regard for our wants, that in order to cure deep wounds, which palliations would only keep open, they should arm themselves with fire and sword. Behold, then, the foundation of Religious severity; behold what is proposed in those statutes, rules, and painful

practices which are established in the cloister; means which, all rigorous as they are, would be of little service, if there were not persons qualified to cause them to be carried into effect; for it is not sufficient for a rule to be severe, if we do not adopt the most efficacious method for making it observed. Vows, regulations and rules, have only an inanimate authority, and are without any force, unless it be secured elsewhere. It is only guides that show us the road which we are to take; but as it is a rough and narrow road, we must incommode ourselves to walk in it; we must get right again if we deviate, we must get up if we fall, we must be more diligent when we have been careless, and for this we must adopt a holy violence.

A field is not fertile, precisely because it is situated in a good soil, because the sun, rain and seasons continually favour it; it is necessary that the plough should open its surface; it is necessary that a careful hand should pull out of it, without mercy, its mischievous productions, briars and weeds, which spring up incessantly, and which would disfigure it if it was uncultivated.

Such would be a noviciate which, to become holy, would only possess the means of sanctification the rule furnishes; the sacraments, instructions, prayers, penances, all this would be of little avail, if it was not governed by a mistress who was firm and attentive in causing these means to be adopted, in punishing faults, in rooting out abuses, and in employing for this purpose the holy rigour of corrections, when she is not able to attain her object by milder ways. Such is the duty of mistresses; and it is only requisite for them to appre-

ciate fully such solid truths, in order to be animated with the necessary courage.

If they have only such pure and reasonable views in exercising severity, they need not fear rendering their ministry odious. Severity is not always a mark of hatred, no more than mildness is a mark of love. What is it to hate?" says St. Augustin; "it is to wish evil. What is it to love? it is to wish good." Now, as goods and evils are sometimes real and sometimes apparent, we often confound them, and love has the effects of hatred, and hatred the effects of love. It is loving the sick person when we cause him the pain that is required to operate his cure; he complains, he cries; but a loving and a skilful hand does not the less spare the incision. It is on this account that the Holy Spirit teaches us, *that a father does not love the child when he spares the rod.* Does not God, the best of fathers, employ the sharpest chastisements, in regard to those whom He loves and desires to save?

"Fear not, then," continues the father already quoted, "to practise, on proper occasions, a severity so laudable in its principle, and useful in its effects. Listen not to a false compassion, which would degenerate into a real cruelty. Solicit, entreat, awaken the negligent, render yourself holily importunate; reprove with freedom the refractory; employ in their regard, prayers, rebukes, threats; sometimes supplicating, sometimes in anger, sometimes filled with sorrow at their faults, and with a desire for their amendment. Do not be contented always with fruitless advice or cold remonstrances." The high priest Heli

acted in this way with his two sons; "Why," said he to them, "is your conduct so little in keeping with the sacred ministry you exercise? You give rise to a thousand rumours which injure you. Correct yourselves, my children." This zeal, in one sense laudable, but too lax and too indulgent, was reckoned of no account in his behalf; he ought, according to the law, to have brought the guilty parties before the judges, and prosecuted them to condemnation; he did not do so, and in this consisted his crime; it cost him his own life, that of his children, and 4000 among the people, who fell under the swords of the Philistines. Wherefore this severity on the part of God? It was because Heli had not been sufficiently severe towards those whom his position of Father and Pontiff obliged to correct.

ARTICLE V.

Of the prudence necessary for a Mistress of Novices.

There are two sorts of prudence: the one false, which the Scripture calls *the prudence of the flesh*, or the *prudence of the world;* the other true, which is that which Jesus Christ recommends, under the name of the *prudence of the serpent.* The first ought to be avoided as a vice disapproved by God, because, although it may seek its ends and may succeed, it is never except by ways that are crooked and methods that are unlawful; it is this prudence which we call craft, artifice, and cunning; or, rather, what we must often call

duplicity, deceit, and bad faith; this prudence, says the Sacred Scripture, "*is an enemy of God, because it withdraws us from His law, and because it only teaches us to do evil.*"

"True prudence is very different," says Father Beaufils; "the simplicity of the dove accompanies it everywhere, but without degrading or weakening it, since it is Jesus Christ's will that one should not be separated from the other." This prudence is nothing else, according to St. Basil, but an exact knowledge of what we must do, or must not do; to which St. Thomas adds: "Docility in profiting by the lights of others; address in facilitating the execution of what we have proposed; the art of reasoning justly, to preserve oneself from the errors into which we might fall; circumspection in examining a project, before giving it its last stroke; precaution in removing obstacles and averting the dangers that we might encounter." This sort of prudence is as necessary in the government of a noviciate, as in civil and political government. It is the proper virtue that should belong to mistresses of novices; so that, if it is wanting in them, others cannot replace it. They may be, if you please, zealous, charitable, humble, and mortified; they may possess all that is necessary to be saints, but, without prudence, they will be unfit to govern, and, all saintly as they may be, they will be very unsuitable mistresses. They will be good for themselves and not for others, and, nevertheless, it is for others that they are appointed.

Yes, prudence is absolutely necessary for mistresses of novices, and they ought to be so abun-

dantly provided with it, as to have enough for themselves and for their inferiors; for, as the latter are not allowed to conduct themselves, and their duty is to obey blindly, it is also requisite, by a necessary consequence, that the former should possess light for their own guidance and for those who are confided to their direction; otherwise, both one and the other will be exposed to take many false steps, and will verify the words of our Saviour: "*If the blind lead the blind, they will both fall into a pit.*"

Prudence should enable mistresses to put in operation and utilize all the qualities needful for their office, to guide them in the exercise of charity, meekness, and firmness; it ought to prescribe the rules of moderation as to due vigilance, temper their zeal, soften their corrections, render their firmness efficacious, in a word, mark out that just medium in which wisdom is found, which, being insufficiently known, is often the cause of virtues degenerating into vices. It is prudence that must suggest the discreet exceptions which sometimes are required in General Rules, which must distinguish in the law the spirit that quickens, from the letter which kills, which teaches us how to reconcile things that seem to be opposed, as indulgence and severity, kindness and rigour, simplicity and distrust, diligence and slowness. It is prudence that must weigh in a balance the interests of God and the interests of man, and in adjusting them, when it is possible, to take away the incompatibility that seems to exist between opposite duties; it is prudence that ought to level down the difficulties, disentangle embarrassments, and, in order

to succeed in this, to be fertile in expedient, and in holy and pious skilfulness. It is by it that we acquire discernment of spirit, that we insinuate ourselves into hearts, that we diversify the conduct we ought to follow, according to the variety we meet with in characters and tempers. It is this which, in the plans we may form, should carry its views into futurity, to foresee what may cross us or be useful to us; and, comparing advantages with inconveniences, decide as to what there is to hope or to fear. In a word, it is the duty of prudence to be the soul of government and the torch to light up all the conduct of a mistress of novices, if she wishes to avoid being exposed to as many falls as steps she may make.

But how are we to acquire so precious a prudence, if we have not received it by nature? It is said that age and experience give it, but it comes too late for those who before old age have an absolute need of it, and it costs those too dear a price who only acquire it by dint of errors and faults, which have resulted from their incapacity. We must then for this purpose address ourselves to the Father of Lights, and follow the counsel of the apostle St. James: "*If any one has need of wisdom, let him ask it of God, who gives to all abundantly.*" We must say to Him with Solomon: "*Give me wisdom that sitteth by Thy throne; for if one be perfect among the children of men, yet if Thy wisdom be not with him, he shall be nothing regarded.....Send her out of Thy holy heaven, and from the throne of Thy Majesty, that she may be with me, and may labour with me, that I may*

know what is acceptable to Thee. For she knoweth and understandeth all things, and shall lead me soberly in my work, and shall preserve me by her power. So shall my works be acceptable, and I shall govern Thy people justly, and shall be worthy of the throne of my father."

All mistresses have, with some difference, what is required to be prudent and wise, as much as is necessary they should be so, provided they know how to turn to advantage the lights which they have from nature and grace. There is no need of great genius, or of profound learning, for this. How many persons have we not seen governing very wisely, though very limited on the side of talent or knowledge? To know the most ordinary things, to exercise a sound judgment upon them, to possess in a moderate degree the art of reasoning, joined to the use of certain means, the detail of which we are going to explain, such is true prudence. Now, the following are the means:

1. To know oneself, to be exactly conscious of the extent of one's lights, and the extent of one's strength, to undertake nothing rashly, and to acquire that laudable distrust which makes us measure our steps, and proportion our projects to our capacity.

2. To reflect a long time on what constitutes the matter of our deliberations, above all, if they are important. Truth, sometimes, is a long while being searched for, it only consists in an indivisible point, which we must seize, after having unravelled it amid a thousand false appearances. We must take leisure to do this, and allow our determination to mature; to presume too much on our own

lights, and precipitate our judgment, is a double source of error.

3. In the same way as there are maxims of wisdom which a mistress ought never to lose sight of, so there are prejudices which she ought always to distrust. We designate thus, opinions, which have only for guarantee an ignorant and thoughtless multitude. For example, the judgments that are formed of persons before they are well known; esteem and contempt, which are only founded on appearances, which have often deceived; narratives or reports, which have often uncertain authors; abusive customs, to which time gives the force of law; the facility of confounding what is permitted with what is only tolerated; the account we make of authorities, without weighing them. Here, then, is a portion of those prejudices against which a mistress ought to be on her guard, for prudence does not admit as true anything but what she has submitted to a process of examination, and never builds on ruinous foundations.

4. There is nothing that can pervert so much our judgment, and expose us to so many imprudences, as self-interest and passion. In order to be perfectly wise, we must be exempt from both; but this is a privilege beyond humanity. A mistress ought to use her endeavours not to listen to them, and to reject their perfidious counsels when she has to take a measure; or, rather, she ought to adopt none until she feels herself entirely free from every movement capable of weighing down the scales of the balance. Passion is a guide that is blind, or which has eyes only to see what can satisfy it. Reason alone should determine our

acts; when the heart takes a part in them it ought to allow itself to be directed by her.

5. To consult past examples, whether good or bad. Man is only instructed by imitation, which is a method of learning, shorter and more efficacious than that of docility to precept, because, what only strikes the ear makes less impression than what we see with our eyes. Mistresses ought often to call to mind the conduct of persons whom they have seen excelling in the art of governing, to study with care their modes of acting, their maxims, their method, and try to conform to them.

6. Not to refine in matters of prudence. Not to take as a model those singular beings who deem themselves wise in adopting a wisdom of their own, which in no respect resembles that of others; these system-makers, *who vanish in their own thoughts*, who, shunning always the beaten track, make no account of any knowledge save of that which it costs much to acquire, and which is by no means always the safest, who by their deep-diving, their refining and rejecting all that is usual, not unfrequently fall into chimeras. Wisdom is to be found in the manner of judging common to the greater number of men, in ordinary ideas, in the principles of what is called good sense; for prudence does not vary like fashions, it belongs to all countries, it is found among all nations, it is the same at all times.

7. To profit by the lights of others, and to do nothing of importance without counsel; it is that which the Holy spirit gives us, and it is also the means of preventing painful regrets. Several

torches give a better light than a solitary one. If an affair can be considered in many ways, one will see what another cannot. It is to presume too much on our own ability, to believe that we cannot be set right by any body. How many times does not a person of inferior capacity give good advice, because accident has enabled him to discover what escapes the most skilful researches?

ARTICLE VI.

On the Impartiality necessary for a Mistress of Novices.

There is nothing more various among the young persons who present themselves in Religious Communities to go through their probation, than the gifts of nature for mind and body. Nature has been lavish towards some, reserved towards others, avaricious towards many, whom it seems to have disgraced. All, besides, have not an equally elevated origin, are not equally provided with the gifts of fortune, or surrounded with recommendations equally powerful. What a fruitful source of antipathies and sympathies for our feeble nature, which is disposed to admire, to love, and to favour whatever is beautiful, perfect, elevated, and to regard with indifference, to forsake, to contemn, and even to hate, what is low, poor, and deficient! If we add to this the caprice and the inconstancy of our tastes and sympathies, we shall easily acknowledge that a mistress who should only consult her vitiated nature, and should only follow her natural inclinations, would be ex-

posed to fall into deplorable disorders, to render useless and fruitless every effort she might make to train to religious virtue the novices who are confided to her. If she is desirous of accomplishing any good among them, she ought to divest herself of all her prejudices, of all her natural sympathies and antipathies, to rise above the flesh and the senses, to have God alone in view, whom she wishes to glorify, and the souls whom she desires to lead to perfection, without any regard to the gifts of nature, to talents, to fortune, to birth, &c. If any of those who are confided to her, should be the special object of her zeal and charity, it should be those among whom she remarks more defects, more miseries, more weakness; they are the stray sheep after whom she ought to run, as the good pastor, that she ought to bring back again into the fold, and who will merit for her the most brilliant crown.

"The charity of a mistress of novices," says Father Beaufils, "ought to be universal, and equal among her spiritual children. No exception, no predilection, no preference should be manifested in the exercise of this virtue. It is God who is its model and object. Its model, He loves what is according to His own image and the work of His hand; His benefits are common, His rain falls, and His sun shines upon all indifferently, He knows not what it is to make an exception of persons; a mistress ought to imitate Him in all this. He is the object of this charity, it is He whom the mistress ought to love in those who have a part in His benevolence; let them have qualities that are amiable or repulsive, it is not

this point which she ought to consider; neither the one nor the other enter into her Rule, but only the will of God, and God wills to be loved in His images, who, although defective and full of imperfections, do not cease to represent Him, and are destined to receive in His name a portion of the tribute of love which we owe to Him. Thus, God will not hold account with a mistress of a charity which is restricted to certain persons from amongst those who ought all to have an equal share in her heart, to those who have merit, mind, talents, birth, or other qualities which distinguish them; to those who have a good heart, a lively spirit, and agreeable manners; to those to whom an edifying fervour, and consummate virtue, seem to give a right of preference over those who are unworthy.

Who can tell the disorders to which this false charity may give occasion? It engenders discontents, jealousies, partialities, and those dangerous murmurings which renew in the cloister that species of scandal which was seen in the primitive Church, when the Greeks, complaining that the widows of the Jews were better treated than theirs, it needed all the prudence and all the authority of the apostles to stifle these first seeds of discord. The Religious in our days are not certainly more holy than these first Christians; whatever degree of virtue they may have, any partiality in the distribution of favours and humiliations is borne with impatience, every one thinks herself equal to another; if this one is favoured, she thinks that an injustice is thereby done to her; everything that is given to another that is too much, she be-

lieves in herself that it is taken away from her. As nobody is distinguished save by their habit, we cannot endure that they should be so in anything else, and we always imagine we see an injustice where there is any preference. Besides, the more there is done to raise certain persons, the more we study to lower them in our own minds. It suffices for you to have more esteem for them than I wish, for me to find in them defects which I never before perceived, and thence arise the most unfounded aversions and antipathies. Thus men are constituted, such are their weaknesses and caprices. Now, a condescending charity suggests that we should deal warily with them, even in their peculiarities and errors.

ARTICLE VII.

On the vigilance which a Mistress of Novices ought to possess.

Vigilance is a duty essentially belonging to the employment of mistresses of novices. "The mistress," says Beaufils, "ought to regard herself as a sentinel that guards a fortress, and who has his eyes always open during the time when sleep shuts those of others; or like a pilot, who continually opens his eyes in order to consult the stars, or lowers them in order to discover the rocks that he may meet on his voyage; or as a shepherd, who does not allow himself any repose when he has to defend his flock against the fury of the wolves, and who uses all possible precautions in order to keep it away from any bad pasturage. She has a

subject for instruction when she beholds what the evil spirit does on this point, whose vigilance is as fatal as hers may become useful. He never loses sight of us, he follows us everywhere, he is incessantly on the watch for occasions to surprise us. Should a mistress have less zeal for the salvation of her children than he has for their destruction? Would she be tranquil whilst he is in continual motion to devour the prey that negligence should deliver up to him? What evils does not the inattention of those who are charged with the care of souls occasion? What an advantage do they not give thereby to the enemy of man? Could he choose a time more favourable in order to sow tares among the good grain, than when men are asleep? "It is then," says St. Ambrose, "that this crafty tempter with surety inflicts his blow under the favour of our imprudent security."

That which constitutes the greatest strength of a fortress in war, is not always the height of its walls, the solidity of its bastions, nor even the number and valour of the combatants who defend it, it is often the vigilance of a wise and attentive governor, who allows himself no repose, who goes everywhere in order to see if the guards are carefully doing their duty, if each one is at his post, and if the orders which he gives are faithfully executed.

To what purpose is it that a noviciate should be defended by forts, which are Rules and Constitutions, to be provided with all sorts of arms, and to have, like the Tower of David, bucklers without number, I mean so many holy practices and means of salvation, to have as defenders mistresses in-

vested with the power of God, and depositaries of His authority, if those mistresses forget what they are, if they neglect their duties; if, like the idols of the Gentiles, they have eyes and see not the disorders that are committed; if they have ears and hear not the complaints and the advice of those who could inform them of what is going on; if they have feet and walk not to the place that might require their presence? Is not this the designation which a Prophet gives them: "O pastors! who are only idols that receive incense and homage, but who are without action, without motion, without life"? Who can tell the number of misfortunes for which they are responsible, as being considered the authors of all those which they do not hinder when they are able? Their negligence in preventing faults is regarded as a tacit permission to commit them, and it is presumed that they approve of the evil which, while able to know, they are willing to ignore. It is matter of experience that nothing so much multiplies faults as impunity; now, impunity is a necessary result of a defect of vigilance, since we cannot punish what we allow to escape our knowledge.

A mistress should continually watch over her noviciate; she ought strenuously to endeavour to know everything that is passing in it, examine with care if God is served in it, if the Rules are well observed, if every sister acquits herself of her duties with fidelity and exactness. She ought to pass from this general attention to that which regards each one in particular, in order to be able to say, as the Good Shepherd, that she knows all her sheep, to have constantly an eye open upon their

conduct, to study their inclinations, to know their virtues and their defects, their good works and infidelities, their progress or their falling away in the spiritual life, to be informed as to their health, and see what use each one makes of her leisure and talents. All these lights are necessary. For what is evil is not corrected, what is good is not sustained, what may be improved is left undone, unless we be acquainted with what requires our solicitude and must exercise our zeal.

But as it is requisite to be wise unto sobriety, it is likewise requisite to temper vigilance with moderation. A mistress ought to avoid all excess on this point, and not establish in the midst of her noviciate a sort of inquisition which would imply distrust. By so doing she would close up hearts, and would hold them in a species of continual restraint, which would no longer allow her to see her children acting in a natural manner, and so not know them as they really are. She ought, on the contrary, to inspire them with a great confidence, so that she may see all without appearing to examine anything. She ought not to undertake to learn everything, her labour would be in vain. The more desirous she would appear of discovering all that was said and done, the more care would be taken in raising obstacles to her so doing, and would create a perpetual conflict between her and her religious children, and often she would have the disadvantage in it. It is important to learn all by simple and natural means, without deviating from the spirit of uprightness, receiving with a prudent diffidence all tale-bearing, which is a source of hatred and discord among the sisters.

Many, moreover, do not need so active a superintendance, their virtue should shelter them from all looking after inspired by too great an anxiety; and as for the others, what would avail any restless and vexatious inspection? She would almost always do nothing more than exasperate and disgust them, and perhaps by way of resentment occasion their adopting a less becoming behaviour than would otherwise have been the case if more moderation and discretion had been used towards them. A mistress, through importunities that are burdensome to herself and others, would finally gain nothing but distrust and contempt, for it is always supposed that there is a littleness and weakness in that fretful and suspicious humour which takes alarm at everything, feels umbrage on all occasions, and is always engaged with the spy and informer, which finds a satisfaction in the little artifices to which she has recourse, makes it a matter of triumph to detect any one in fault, and finds a cause for joy in what ought to engender confusion. A solid mind never stoops to this childish meanness, it observes that which is within its reach, and leaves the knowledge of the rest to Him *who sees in secret.* It never confounds a religious vigilance with a petty and vexatious disquiet, or a malicious curiosity; it follows the counsel of St. Bernard, who wishes us to know how to shut and open our eyes at seasonable times; that there are many things we should ignore, many we should dissemble, and some we should forget as if never known. A mistress should weigh well this useful lesson of a great saint, and of a man of consummate skill in the art of governing Religious.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE KNOWLEDGE NECESSARY FOR A MISTRESS OF NOVICES, AND OF THE INSTRUCTION TO BE GIVEN THEM.

"But be thou vigilant, labour in all things, do the work of an Evangelist, fulfil the ministry, meditate on these things, be wholly in these things, that thy proficiency may be manifest to all. Attend to thyself and to doctrine, be earnest in them, for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee. Preach the word, be instant in season, and out of season, reprove, entreat, rebuke with all patience and doctrine."

These urgent recommendations may be addressed to mistresses of novices as well as to ministers of the Gospel. In fact, the mistresses are in a certain sense the pastors and teachers of the young persons who are confided to them; God has established them in order that they may be the light of the privileged nation which He has chosen; it is for them to enlighten it and instruct it as to its duties; it is for them to guide it in the paths of the sanctity and the perfection to which it is called; to maintain in it, by their exhortations, the courage, zeal, and fervour which are necessary for it to reach the term which it ought to strive to attain.

But what ought to be the matter of the instructions of the mistress of novices? She ought to instruct them:—1. In dogma and morals. 2. On the Sacraments. 3. On the Vows, the Rules, and Constitutions of the Order. 4. On the manner of conquering their passions, and of attaining to a spiritual life. 5. On the interior life and the means of acquiring it, &c. What knowledge ought she not herself to possess to fulfil this duty worthily? In the following articles we shall trace out for her an outline of such knowledge, we shall point out for her the sources whence she will be able to draw it, and the instruction she has to give her novices.

ARTICLE I.

Knowledge which is necessary for a Mistress in Dogma and Morality. Instructions which she has to give to her Novices.

Dogma includes all the truths which we are bound to believe; the Apostles' Creed is their abridgment.

A mistress should have as exact a knowledge as possible of these truths, and particularly of God, of His nature, and His principal perfections; of the Mystery of the Holy Trinity; of the Creation; of the Angels; of their nature and perfections; of the fall of the wicked angels and their occupations; of man, his nature and his end, of his fall and its fatal consequences; of death and resurrection; of the particular and general judgment; of original and actual sin; of mortal and

venial sin; of the gravity and effect of both one and the other; of the mystery of the Incarnation; of the Birth, and all-holy life of Jesus Christ; of His virtues, His labours, and principal miracles; of the establishment of the Church; of its nature and characters; of the Institution of the Sacraments by the Son of God; of Redemption and its necessity; of the sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ; of the Holy Ghost, of His descent upon the Apostles, and the effects which it produced in them; of the mission of the Apostles, their labours, their sufferings; of the Gospel preached, then committed to writing by them, and brought down to us.

On morality, a mistress ought to know and to be in a position to explain in a clear manner what each commandment prescribes or forbids Christians to do, according to their age, their condition, and their state.

The source which is the most safe and most convenient whence a mistress of novices can acquire her knowledge, is "*The Christian Doctrine, by L'Homond.*"

But is it not doing an injustice to a mistress to suppose that she does not possess all this elementary knowledge? We prefer to believe that she possesses it for herself; but does she possess it sufficiently to give an account of it? Does she possess it in a manner, above all, sufficiently profound to expound and explain it to her novices? Even ecclesiastics that are the most learned, prepare themselves before their instructions, when they wish to give them with the precision and dignity that the Christian doctrine requires; with much

more reason a mistress, who has not studied theology, who perhaps even rarely has the Christian doctrine brought under her attention, must needs make herself well informed upon it before she gives instruction in it, above all, to persons of mature age, who stand in need of a more solid teaching, and who may put her embarrassing questions to which she might have some difficulty in answering, unless she had studied again beforehand the points she is obliged to treat.

It is a strict obligation for a mistress to instruct her children in a solid manner on the fundamental truths of religion :—1. Because the knowledge of these truths is essential to salvation. 2. Because it is the basis of sanctity and of Christian perfection, and because every spiritual edifice which is not supported on this basis, must necessarily crumble away and fall into ruin. 3. Because the greater part of those who enter religion in order to make their probation, are not sufficiently instructed. In fact, those who, when first they present themselves to be lay-sisters, have ordinarily not received any but a very limited education; sometimes even they know not how to read, or only read with difficulty; many among them, at the epoch of their first communion, are ignorant even of the letter of the catechism, or only know it in an imperfect manner; a little after this epoch, if they were interrogated, they would scarcely be able to remember a few words without connection and without sense; since that time, imagining to themselves falsely that virtue consists in the practice of exterior acts, they have recited forms of long and multiplied prayers, have assisted

at the offices of the Church, approached the holy table; when they have felt themselves pressed by a desire to advance in virtue, they have even increased these practices. But have they fortified the basis of this edifice of exterior piety? Have they reviewed in their mind the truths which they had only learned in so superficial a manner at the catechism in the parish? Have they endeavoured to comprehend them better and more deeply to engrave them on their memory? The greater part have not thought of them, have almost entirely forgotten these truths, and no longer possess them, even those that are indispensable to be known in order to approach worthily the Sacraments of Penance and the Holy Eucharist.

Among the postulants for the choir, who have received a more careful education, many are not much better instructed; either they are ignorant of many truths that are indispensable to be known, or they understand them not, or interpret them ill.

The first duty of a mistress, when she receives a new candidate into the noviciate is, then, to interrogate her on the fundamental truths, in order to satisfy herself that she is sufficiently instructed; if she is not, to give her apart instructions, according to her ability, until she retains what is necessary to know in order worthily to approach the sacraments, to which, until then, she cannot be admitted. The mistress, in this case, ought to warn the confessor and have an understanding with him, in order that the subject should make a good general confession of her whole life, for those which she has made in a state of gross

ignorance of truths necessary to salvation are radically null.

As to those candidates who are more instructed, were they even professed, a mistress should never fail to give them every week some instructions on the truths of religion, whether in order that they may not forget them, or whether, in fine, in order that they may better understand them.

"It would be an endless task," says a master of spiritual life, "to seek to set down in detail to what lengths the instruction ought to extend which the novices may require, whether they be young or more advanced in age. We are astonished, when we examine carefully into religious communities, to find in them less of solid piety and more imperfections than we supposed to exist, the source of this evil is, that many become ordinarily religious before they are truly Christian; they know the founder of their Order, his Constitutions and his Regulations, and they know but little of Jesus Christ and His Gospel; they have pretended to become perfect in a day, before even being well-instructed as to their own misery and defects; they thought they could be cured without knowing fundamentally their maladies and their physician, they commenced the construction of their edifice by the roof, and not by the foundation. They wanted to paint and embellish their house before it was built, hence all the miseries which are witnessed in monasteries.

"The remedy for so many evils is to employ the time of the noviciate in thoroughly grounding the novices in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, His precepts, His maxims, His remedies, in giving

good explanations of the Gospel, in showing the dignity of man, whom God alone could render happy; his fall and misery; the corruption of his heart; his incapacity of himself to do any good; the necessity of continual prayer, of penance, &c. It is also very necessary," continues the same author, "to establish the rising virtue of the novices on the great and efficacious truths of religion, such as sin, death, paradise, hell, &c. We never speak of them to novices, either because we regard those truths as too common, or as beneath Christian perfection; in which we are very much deceived, since they are the foundation of Christian perfection. When these truths, and others not less important, shall have been known by young persons who enter into convents, there is nothing more useful than to speak of them again when they have more need of it; for they are the truths which strengthen a vocation, which cause piety to take root, which prepare the way for all religious virtues, which cause us to undertake everything, and to suffer everything."

ARTICLE II.

Knowledge necessary for a Mistress on the Sacraments. Instructions which she ought to give her Novices on this point.

A mistress of novices ought to know the nature, the matter, and form of the seven sacraments; the difference which exists between the sacraments of the living and the sacraments of the dead, which among them are necessary to salvation, in what

dispositions they ought to be in order to receive them worthily. But the two sacraments on which a mistress ought to be particularly instructed, are the Sacraments of Penance and the Holy Eucharist: 1. Because they are in the cloister those most frequently used, and because their reception, with or without the necessary dispositions, is of the highest consequence; 2. Because the confessor, only hearing the novices in the sacred tribunal but once a week, it is for the mistress to give, in the interval between the confessions, the advice and even the decisions which they may require in the midst of the temptations which besiege them, and of the faults that may escape from their weakness.

Relatively to the Sacrament of Penance, a mistress ought to know the essential difference that exists between a mortal sin, a venial sin, and imperfections.

Mortal sin is a grave and fully voluntary violation of the law of God. It supposes two things, as may be seen: gravity in the matter, and perfect consent in the will. This sin, which gives death to our soul, is the sole matter necessary for the Sacrament of Penance.

Venial sin is a violation of the law of God in a light matter; a grave violation may in like manner only cause a venial fault, when there is only an imperfect consent in the act of commission. This sort of sin, which does not bring death to the soul, but only weakens grace in it, is not matter rigorously necessary for the Sacrament of Penance. Every Christian acts with prudence, in accusing himself of it at the sacred tribunal, above all,

because it is difficult to determine the limit that separates it from mortal sin; a Religious solicitous for her perfection, never omits it in her confessions.

In fine, imperfections are slight faults that escape the frailty of the purest souls. It is of these faults that it is written: "*That a just man falls seven times a day.*"

When a novice has fallen since her last confession into a mortal sin, or doubts that it is such, the mistress cannot, in any case, permit her to go to communion. If, since her confession, she remembered a fault of this nature that was forgotten at the holy tribunal, without negligence in the examen of conscience being the cause of this forgetfulness, the mistress may allow her to go to communion, because this fault has been remitted with the others, but she ought to recommend it to be confessed when she presents herself again at the sacred tribunal, and this accusation shall be made at the next confession.

As to venial sins and imperfections into which the novices should fall after their confession, they are not a radical obstacle to the reception of Holy Communion. If, nevertheless, the venial faults into which the novices have fallen should be very numerous, with deliberate advertence, the mistress would act prudently in restricting the number of the communions, leaving the future to the judgment of the confessor.

A humble and prudent mistress ought to be generally very reserved on all that touches the Sacrament of Penance. She ought to think herself less enlightened on this point than the con-

fessor, since she has not devoted herself to studies as profound as he has done, since she receives from Heaven less extensive graces in order to judge of a sacrament of which she is not constituted the dispenser. She ought then to guard herself against expressing any blame, direct or indirect, relative to the decisions that have been given in the sacred tribunal, otherwise she will expose herself to stifle in the heart of her novices the perfect confidence which they ought to have in their spiritual father, and to occasion them an evil often difficult to repair; she ought not even ever to manifest any doubt or surprise on this point. Has the confessor judged it fitting to impose a very severe penance, or even to defer absolution, the mistress ought not to appear astonished or dissatisfied; she ought neither to humiliate nor to punish her who has been the object of this decision, or to exhibit towards her marks of less kindness; she ought still less to interrogate her on the causes which determined the decision of the confessor; because, according to the unanimous opinion of all theologians, interior faults only belong to the domain of confession. If the novice contents herself with saying that the number of her communions has been restricted, or even that she has not the permission to make any, the mistress ought to be satisfied with this declaration; to give her consolation, if she has need of it, to encourage her, to press her to submit with humility to the decisions that have been given her, and to follow the counsels and direction of the confessor, as if they came from Jesus Christ Himself. If the novice, of her own accord, makes her

some disclosure, let her hear it with kindness, without pressing her to go further than she has any intention of doing; then let her always calm, console, and encourage her. If she remarks any irritation in that novice against the confessor, irritation which always has its principle in self-love or indocility, she ought to reprove her and impose silence on her.

If, instead of adopting this wise and prudent conduct, the mistress should appear astonished and dissatisfied, if she blames the conduct of the confessor as being too severe, or if, acknowledging his wisdom and prudence, she gets angry with the novice, scolds her, and asks her what could be the cause of such rigour, tells her, with harshness, that she must change her conduct, that otherwise she would be excluded from the noviciate and sent back to her family, that no one can thus remain in the noviciate without approaching the sacraments, she exposes herself either to cast this novice into despondency and cause her to lose her vocation, or to precipitate her into the abyss of sacrilege, as well as a part of the noviciate, if they should obtain a knowledge of this imprudent conduct; and it is not a case without a precedent, we have been witnesses to it more than once. Behold how this frightful misfortune happens. Novices who have any habit which they find a difficulty in correcting, perceiving that they are looked down upon, humbled, and exposed even to be sent away, when they are not absolved, adopt the step of no longer revealing their faults in the sacred tribunal, and go from one abyss to another

When, on the contrary, the mistresses follow the

counsels of prudence which we have given above, novices, seeing that they are neither observed nor treated with less kindness when they are not admitted to Holy Communion, submit with calm and docility to the decisions that are given them, continue to be candid, simple and open with their director, finish by following his counsels, triumph over themselves, and become usually good religious.

That which deceives the mistresses of novices, relative to the conduct of the director, and leads them sometimes perhaps to disapprove of it, is that they imagine themselves that they know their novices better than he knows them himself; and there is in this a great error, which experience has shown us. That a mistress is better acquainted with her children, their modesty, their fidelity to silence, to punctuality, &c., than the director, we will readily admit; but that they know better than he the progress which they make in the combat with their secret passions of envy, jealousy, pride, and other still more secret passions, as a general proposition, we formally deny, and we have for it the guarantee of our own experience, and that of a great number of very skilful directors in the direction of religious communities.

A novice will open her heart to her mistress, even on matters the most delicate, with a freedom that appears to admit of no reserve; but with this open-heartedness will she declare to her all her faults without exception? Out of twenty novices, there will not be found five who will do it, and why? Because, 1. This avowal is painful, very

painful indeed. 2. Because they are not obliged to do so. 3. Because the seal of the direction is not as inviolable as that of confession.

If we suppose that, for the first and second time, the novice opens herself without any reserve to her mistress, whether through confidence, or to consult her, or to learn from her the manner of declaring her faults; when she has once received her counsel and advice, will she confide to her ever afterwards, with an equal freedom, her hidden weaknesses? Almost never. In order not to have the appearance of withdrawing her confidence, she will explain some of her temptations; she will make avowal to her of some slight faults, or even, from time to time, of some one of the grave and numerous faults into which she has fallen; but will she discover to her all the abyss of her misery? No. And why? Because she knows that she is not obliged to do so, and that she does not find the seal of direction sufficiently positive.

After this statement, founded on experience, and even on *common* sense, it may be seen whether a mistress would be prudent in maintaining that she knew her novices better, as to the forum of conscience, than the director, when disapproving his conduct, but, above all, in urging her novices to take the habit, or even to be professed, contrary to his advice. A prudent mistress ought never to admit to the Religious habit, and, above all, to a profession, any of her children, without having obliged them to ask beforehand the advice of their director; above all, when his experience and pru-

dence are well known to her. This digression has not appeared devoid of utility for mistresses.

The mistress of novices ought to instruct her children on the necessity of a serious examen before confession, on the sincerity that ought to prevail at the accusation of the faults which they have committed, making them understand well that God, who searches the bottom of hearts, only having promised pardon to those who return to Him with sincerity, could not grant it to a soul that should not possess uprightness as its portion; that the priest in the sacred tribunal, being, all at once, both a judge and a physician of souls, could not fulfil this double office, if he was not informed in an exact manner of the number and gravity of the faults that have been committed, and the wounds that have been received.

The mistress ought equally and forcibly to impress on her novices the indispensable necessity of contrition, and of the firm purpose that should accompany the confession, demonstrating to them that God, in spite of His infinite goodness, could not pardon a heart that was not repentant, because, being infinitely holy, He could not behold, save with a look of wrath, a heart that continues attached to sin, His most cruel enemy.

In regard to the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, the mistress ought to know perfectly the dispositions that are necessary to be often admitted to it, the danger of unworthy communions, and even of communions that are simply useless. She ought to know that the article in the rules that indicates for the Religious a certain number of communions every week, is purely optional, and

not imperative; that it only signifies that the Religious may, each week, if they are judged worthy according to the rules of the Church, approach the sacred banquet the number of times indicated; consequently, that they are by no means obliged to communicate so often, when the director or the superiors judge it proper to make them deviate from this article. She ought to explain all these points to her novices.

The mistresses may occasionally permit their novices to make special communions, to encourage them when they have rendered themselves worthy of it, and when the director, for reasons known to himself, has not restricted them in the ordinary number. They can equally, in punishment for some exterior irregularity, restrict the number of communions allowed by the director. (Consult the *Way of Perfection*, pages 261 and 265.)

ARTICLE III.

Knowledge necessary for a mistress, regarding the Vows, the Rules and the Constitutions in vigour in her Order. Instructions which she ought to give on this point.

A mistress ought thoroughly to know the vows in force in the institute of which she is a member; she ought to know their number, nature, and extent; but she ought, in a special manner, to study that of poverty, the extent of the obligations of which is not the same in all Religious congregations; the limits of this vow are laid down in the constitutions that regulate each of them: it is

there that they must be studied. As each makes a vow to observe poverty in conformity with the constitutions of her own proper congregation, all that these constitutions permit her is permitted, and all that they prohibit her is forbidden upon this point.

The mistress ought to know, besides, what is of strict precept in each vow, and what is only of perfection, in order not to be exposed to fall into rigorism, in declaring to be a grave fault what is only a slight fault, or when a simple imperfection. She should know, in an exact and detailed manner, all the points of her rules and constitutions, under what pains they oblige, in relation to the vows and matters purely connected with discipline. All the articles that concern the vows and determine their extent, oblige like the vows themselves; other points do not oblige of themselves under pain of sin; their violation, nevertheless, almost always implies a fault more or less grave: 1st, On account of the motive that leads to their violation. These motives are ordinarily idleness, negligence, lukewarmness, want of zeal for perfection, positive or interpretative, as St. Thomas says. 2nd, On account of the scandal that accompanies this violation. 3rd, On account of the end one proposes to oneself in these kinds of violations, an object which is almost always vicious and condemnable. (Consult *The Way of Perfection*, pages 25 and 104.)

After having deeply imbued her mind with the duties of her holy state, the mistress of novices ought to explain them to her spiritual daughters in a clear, simple, and methodical manner, in all

their detail and without any palliative or disguise. "It is," says Collet, "one of the most rigorous duties of the mistresses; it would be an act of deceit and bad faith to present to youth nothing but flowers during the time of their probation, and only to reveal the thorns to them when they have taken the last step of their career."

"I wish," adds Father Bourdaloue, "that nothing should be dissembled to a young person who forms the design of retiring into the house of God, and who feels herself called there; I wish that no disguise should be made by brilliant but false paintings, but that she should be allowed to see all the consequences of the choice that she is making; that objects should be placed before her such as they are, and that she should be shown the thorns with which the path is strewed on which she is entering; for what, in effect, is the Religious life, but the Gospel reduced to practice, and to the most perfect practice? And what is the Gospel, but a law of self-denial, of perpetual war against oneself?

But it will be said that these thoughts may discourage and dishearten a soul; and I answer that it is from this very source, on the contrary, that she can and ought to draw the most proper motive to determine and strengthen her in her resolution. How? Because it is from thence that she learns to esteem the Religious state by which it is precisely and supremely worthy of esteem; to wit, as a state of sanctification, as a state of salvation, as a state in which the Religious soul can amass every day fresh merits for eternity, and accumulate without ceasing crowns upon crowns; the

capital point to which she ought alone to devote herself, and in which she ought to make her happiness on earth to consist. Thus is it, that upon this alone the mistress should insist, and in this alone she ought to comprehend the excellent prerogatives of the Religious profession. Whatever may be the case as to all the rest, and whatever the colours that may be employed in embellishing and extolling it, when we set aside this important consideration of salvation, I would not hesitate to say, in particular, of the Religious state and of the persons who are engaged in it, what St. Paul said in general of Christianity and Christians who profess it; "*If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are, of all men, the most miserable.*" This I undertake to say without fear of disavowal from any of those who possess any knowledge of the Religious life, and, above all, of those who have any experience in it. But from the moment that we are spoken to of salvation, and our vocation is described as a pledge of predestination and salvation, and we are informed that there is in it a predilection on the part of God, and a special providence in regard to our salvation, ah! 'tis then that we can exclaim with the same St. Paul, "*That in much experience of tribulation they have had abundance of joy. I am filled with comfort, I exceedingly abound with joy in all my tribulation.*"

When Jesus Christ gave peace to His disciples, He admonished them, at the same time, that it was not a peace such as the world conceives and considers. "*My peace I give you,*" says this

Divine Master to them. "*It is Mine, and not that of the world.*" That peace of the world, that fatal and reprobate peace, is an idle and indolent peace, founded upon the care and commodities of life, upon all that pleases nature and satisfies self-love; but the peace of a Religious soul is established upon very opposite principles; upon hatred of oneself, on a perpetual sacrifice of one's sensual appetites, inclinations, passions, and will; in such manner as that a Religious soul cannot be content in his retreat, except inasmuch as he knows how to humble himself, to conquer himself, to render himself obedient, poor, patient, assiduous at work, exact in his duties, dispensing himself with nothing, being nice and particular with oneself in nothing, being unwilling to spare oneself in anything. It must cost her something to do this; but through a species of miracles, the less she takes pains about her person, the less she spares herself, the more she feels the abundance of peace poured out over her heart.

Behold truths of the highest importance, which a mistress ought to endeavour to make all her novices well understand without disguising anything from them.

ARTICLE IV.

Knowledge necessary for a Mistress of Novices upon the means of conquering their passions and attaining the spiritual life. Instructions which she should give her daughters on this point.

To triumph over himself and command his passions, is the most glorious triumph that man can obtain, and the most beautiful empire he can rule upon the earth; wise men, both ancient and modern, are agreed in acknowledging this: but to direct his fellow men in the midst of the painful combats that lead to this triumph, to teach them to govern themselves with a wise and persevering firmness after the victory, and to secure its fruits by a constant control over passions that are always disorderly, is the most difficult of sciences; the learned are not the less in accord on this point.

This great science a mistress of novices ought to possess, since, by her employment, she is rigorously obliged to practise them continually. But what multiplied knowledge does it not exact from her! A profound knowledge of man and of the two wills that exist in him since his fall into sin; a knowledge of the origin and the power of these two wills; of the influence which they exercise over our actions; of the threefold concupiscence, which is the soul and aliment of the inferior will; of the different means suggested by the masters of a spiritual life to combat it with success, and to subject the inferior will to the superior will; a

knowledge of the particular enemy that ought to be attacked at first, in preference to all others, of which it is the chief and the support; of the time during which we ought to be engaged in a special war with it, without, however, ceasing to keep the others in check; of the true success that we may obtain in this war; of the essential difference that exists between the feeling of concupiscence and consent to evil; between the subtraction of sensible graces that are not necessary to triumph over our enemies, and the subtraction of those without which man can do nothing; of the manner of rising after the falls that we may experience; of the means of repairing them, and making them serve for our advancement; of the means of counteracting the artifices and treachery of our enemies, and of making them serve for their shame and our advantage; a knowledge, in fine, of the most efficacious means to sustain and raise up, when needed, the courage of man, which is often sinking in the midst of long and painful contests; behold what is indispensable for a mistress. If she does not possess this precious knowledge she will do nothing but commit serious errors, she will discourage her novices by making them undergo marches and counter-marches, in paths that are unknown to her, and will cause them to lose their vocation.

The Way of true and solid Virtue, a work which we have published expressly to teach a man how to triumph over himself, and in which we have collected together all that has been said, which is most useful on this important point, by the most skilful masters, will be of great service to the mis-

tress; she can read the first and second part of it with the greatest fruit.

But what instructions ought a mistress to give to her spiritual daughters on this point, on which their perseverance and perfection depend?

By the first kind of instruction, of which we have already spoken, and which includes the knowledge of dogma, of morals, of the sacraments, of the vows, of the rules and constitutions, the mistress will enlighten the minds of her daughters; by the latter, and pursuing with order and method the points which we have marked out, expounding them and developing them in a practical manner, she will reform and sanctify their hearts; these two kinds of instruction are equally useful, and the mistress ought to work them hand in hand.

But we are convinced that simple instructions, which should not be preceded by any lecture of which the mistress asks an account, or followed by any analysis, will remain without fruit, at least such as is lasting. Words fly away, it is said, and they disappear with so much the more rapidity, as minds are naturally distracted. Moreover, several novices may be preoccupied during the instructions that are addressed to them, and only hear a portion of them; others may have a slow understanding, and not seize nor comprehend what is explained to them, or have enough of memory to retain it. We would wish, then, and it is the opinion of grave and experienced men, that for dogma, morals, the sacraments, the vows, the rules and the constitutions, the mistresses should put into the hands of each novice the *Christian Doctrine of L'Homond, and the Way of*

Perfection; and for the knowledge of the human heart, the manner of triumphing over their passions and attaining the spiritual life, *The Way of true and solid Virtue;* let them fix one or two chapters, of which each should be obliged to render an account upon an appointed day, which the mistress should then explain, and of which she should require, on one of the following days, a short analysis.

A mistress who would faithfully follow this plan, in force among several communities, will, we are convinced, see the face of her noviciate change with rapidity.

ARTICLE V.

Knowledge which a mistress ought to possess of the interior life, and on the means of attaining it. Instruction she ought to give her novices on this point.

What end does a Religious soul propose to herself in triumphing over her passions, in detaching herself from the flesh, from the senses, and all created things? She proposes to herself to give her soul entirely to God, in uniting it to Him by an interior and habitual communication; she proposes to unite herself to God, almost like a friend is united to a friend, like a son is united to the father or to the mother whom he loves tenderly, and by whom he is tenderly beloved; a union of thoughts, a union of affections, a union in every sort of existence, which should permit it to say with the great apostle: "*I live now, not I, but it is Jesus*

Christ who liveth in me." This sublime end, all those who renounce the world to retire into the solitude of the cloister, should propose to themselves. They separate themselves from all in order to be united to Him who is all, and to find all in Him.

The mistress is charged with initiating her children into the secret of this life: to introduce them into it, to engender them in a manner into it, she ought then to know it fundamentally; she ought to know the narrow and the thorny ways that lead to it, as well as the difficulties, the obstacles, and the rocks that may be met with in it. (Consult the *Way of Perfection*, page 112.)

But, besides this general knowledge, many other kinds of special knowledge are necessary for the mistress. She ought to know: 1. That God, who does not give to all the same degree of intelligence nor the same degree of grace, does not, besides, call all souls to the same degree of perfection; 2. That God does not conduct all souls to perfection by the same way. He conducts to it some by sweetness, consolations and sensible favours; others by trials and tribulations; the greater part, by a way in which both succeed each other, or are found blended together; 3. That God does not raise souls to perfection in a manner equally easy or prompt; 4. That tempers and characters vary almost to an infinite degree, and the same means cannot be employed with equal success in regard to persons whose temper and character are opposite; 5. That persons who have preserved their baptismal innocence, cannot

be directed like those who have had the misfortune to lose it.

In the instructions which the mistress gives to her daughters on the interior life, she ought:

1. To explain to them clearly, its nature, sublimity, and advantages; she ought to point out to them the principal means of attaining it; such as humility, love of God, conformity to His will, fidelity to grace, silence, recollection, &c.; each of these means should be developed in a clear, methodical manner, and adapted to every capacity. (*Way of Perfection*, page 117 and following.)

2. The mistress ought to train her daughters in the practices of an interior life, the principal of which are meditation, which she ought to teach them to make in a methodical manner,* the examen of conscience, spiritual lecture, direction, assistance at the holy sacrifice of the mass, visits to the holy sacrament, recitation of the divine office, confession, sacramental communion, spiritual communion, &c. (*Way of Perfection*, page 185 and following.) She ought to direct them step by step in these exercises, point out to them the method which they ought to follow, give them the explanations they require, remove their doubts, stimulate their zeal, &c.

3. She ought to teach them to sanctify, by an interior life, all their exterior actions, even the most ordinary, such as rising, going to bed, sleep,

* The mistress ought to oblige her daughters to learn by memory a method of mental prayer by rule, make them repeat it to her, every week a portion, and make them render an account of the manner in which they make it. Many novices and Religious even, who are professed, know not how to make mental prayer, and lose their time over it.

meals, recreation, manual labour, &c. (*Way of Perfection*, page 280.)

4. She ought to prepare them for the trials which are ordinarily met with in the interior life, such as dryness, weariness, disgust, abandonment, scruples, &c.; to aid them in bearing them with courage, and to point out to them their principle and utility.

5. To forewarn them against the rocks that they may encounter in it, against which they are exposed to be dashed to pieces, even in the cloister, and the principal of which are, abuse of grace, lukewarmness, and illusions. (*Way of Perfection*, page 323.)

We repeat it, a mistress who should follow with zeal, courage and perseverance, this plan of conduct in the direction of her noviciate, would accomplish in it an immense good, and would prepare for her Community subjects that would be very valuable and useful. But, we say it with sorrow, many mistresses labour not with sufficient zeal both to instruct themselves and to instruct the daughters who are confided to them; it is a great evil and a source of disorders in communities, who intrust them with an office of which they are not worthy, for these communities finish by being almost exclusively composed of Religious, who are neither instructed in their duties, nor trained to the virtues proper for their state; hence faults without number, then the ruin of monasteries.

Doctors and masters of a spiritual life are unanimous as to the obligation imposed on mistresses to instruct their novices, and as to the good which

their instructions may effect; we shall limit ourselves to the testimony of one only.

Let a mistress know the Gospel well, let her possess the lives of the saints who are the founders of her institute, let her perfectly understand her Rules, let her read over and over again "*The Imitation*," Rodriguez, &c.; let her make always a proper preparation for the conferences which she has to make to her novices, and she will know how to speak in a manner worthy of God, without departing from the simplicity suited to her state. But if, relying too much on her pretended facility, she opens her mouth without any preparation, and, above all, without that kind of preparation which is always made so usefully at the foot of the cross of our Saviour, she may rely upon it that she will not do any good. It is, nevertheless, certain that these sorts of discourses, when they are made with unction and a certain dignity, do immense good. I know that God distributes His graces as He judges fit, that all those who labour in the order of His providence are not always doctors and prophets, and that the talent of speaking, so useful in one respect, and so dangerous in another, is given in different proportions; I know, in a word, that there are persons who say all that they wish, and others who only find with difficulty the happy expression of which they may be in need; but we do not ask from a mistress that she should speak like a St. Chrysostom, we only ask of her every time she speaks, that she should speak with reason and discretion; we ask that her instructions, her advice, her reprimands, should be always seasoned with salt, according as the apostle pre-

scribes, that is to say, that there should be neither too much nor too little; we ask of her, that each, in hearing her, may feel that her tongue speaks from the abundance of her heart. Now, for this, there is only needed a little careful reading, and this reading will never be made except in one of those books where simplicity holds the place of ornament, where the author does not lose himself in metaphysical reasonings of which people are not usually able to grasp the meaning; where, in fine, it may be seen that search has been made, not to please, but to instruct, to edify, and to lead to God.

PART II.

RULES OF CONDUCT WHICH A MISTRESS OF NOVICES OUGHT TO FOLLOW TO TRAIN HER DAUGHTERS UP IN CHRISTIAN AND RELIGIOUS VIRTUES.

The mistress ought not to limit herself to her own perfection, to her own personal instruction and that of her novices; she ought also to train them up to the practice of the Christian and religious virtues. In order to assist her in this difficult task, we shall set before her, under the authority of the most skilful masters of a religious life, general Rules applicable to all her noviciate, then special Rules applicable to each of the members that compose it, according to their particular wants.

CHAPTER I.

GENERAL RULES APPLICABLE TO THE DIRECTION OF ALL POSTULANTS AND NOVICES.

ARTICLE I.

The Mistress ought to endeavour to gain the confidence of her Novices, in order to induce them to open their interior to her. Means which she ought to employ to accomplish this object.

Three things are necessary to a mistress, according to Father Lafiteau, to induce her novices

to open their hearts with an entire confidence: a perfect cordiality, an infinite discretion, an inviolable secrecy; a perfect cordiality in the affection which she manifests towards them; an infinite discretion in the questions which she puts to them; an inviolable secrecy on the avowals which she receives from them. By her cordiality she attaches them to herself; by her discretion she charms them; and by her secrecy she succeeds in gaining them.

The point for a mistress to effect, is to engage her novices to have nothing hidden from her, not even the depths of their own conscience; and this is a matter not so easy to accomplish as it may at first be imagined. Without doubt the desire to observe the Rule, and a love of perfection, are two great inducements to raise above their natural repugnance souls which God has prevented by His grace; but how much have we not to combat with, when we have to resist the reflections of self-love, against the swellings of pride, against the artifices of the devil? Now, these are the different assaults which a novice or a postulant has naturally to sustain, when her mistress exhorts her to open to her the smallest intricacies of her heart. Self-love does not like in any manner to discover its weaknesses; pride is sure to be hurt at everything that is humiliating, and the devil does not fail to suggest pretexts to cause a soul to fear that in unveiling herself to her mistress she is going to lower herself in her estimation.

It is certain, nevertheless, that a mistress will never know how to succeed in conducting her novices in the ways of perfection, if she does not

succeed in knowing them well, and it is not less certain that a mistress will only know them inasmuch as they shall be willing to open to her their interior. But how are the novices to be induced to discover what they would sometimes wish to hide from themselves? There is nothing that can gain the victory but the existence of a cordial feeling. The mistress will rarely find novices to resist for a long time a constant affection and marks of affectionate tenderness; our heart is so formed, that it shuts itself against indifference or contempt, and that it opens to the esteem or friendship that is entertained for us. The more impossible then it will be for a mistress to sound, despite themselves, the abyss of their heart, the more she ought to strive, by her amiable manners, to prevail that they should give her the key. But, as we have said, they require to be assisted, and if it must cost them something to give their confidence to their mistress, it must also cost her something to acquire it.

For this purpose there are means that should be adopted, and obstacles that should be avoided. The obstacles would be, to receive them with coldness, to hear them with indifference, to speak to them with haughtiness, to send them away with disdain, only to have predilections for some, and severity towards others; to believe too readily upon simple reports, and then with difficulty relinquish our first impressions.

The means to be adopted, on the contrary, are to be always in their regard of easy access, to be gracious in demeanour, and of an even temper; to exhibit a great deal of patience in listening to

them, prudence in interrogating them, meekness in answering them, compassion in entering into their troubles, kindness and charity in comforting them.

With qualities so amiable, so charming, and at the same time so suitable, the mistress will see that there will be none of her novices that do not regard her truly as her mother; they will willingly pour out their hearts into hers. Not only will they discover to her with the most entire confidence their good and evil inclinations, but also, according to the spirit of the Rule, they will not hide from her even their temptations; and without entering in this regard into unnecessary details, which sometimes it would not be advisable to do, they will tell her enough to make themselves well understood by her.

When confidence is firmly established, the mistress will be herself surprised that the openness of the heart should be so far advanced. Should there have been one among her novices, who, on this head might have conceived a little ill feeling against her, she will behold her with astonishment confide to her, of her own accord, her former prejudices in her regard, tell her quite naturally what had caused them, and rejoice with her on their being at length dispelled.

Then, what a satisfaction for a mistress thus to possess the hearts of all her children, and to be able to fashion and to train them as she pleases! I do not say that among a great number there will not be met some who may feel a confusion in manifesting their miseries to her, but she will vanquish a confusion that gains esteem and

regard, and will consider the shame that we imagine in this sort of avowals, as we look upon the phantoms that only cause fear during the night, because they are only imperfectly seen at a distance, and which disappear entirely when they are approached.

The mistress will then show, by her amiability, that she is towards her novices that faithful friend into whose bosom it is sweet to deposit all one's troubles; this tender and charitable mother, who, when her novice has opened to her all her miseries, devotes herself to console her in her sufferings, to enlighten her in her doubts, to help her in her needs, and God will repay her with usury.

We have to add, that the mistress, when her daughters discover to her their interior, should avoid manifesting any eager desire to know more about her than she judges fit to declare to her, but to wait until the novice who speaks to her should be inclined of herself to enter into more ample details, unless she exhibits a desire to be helped in her avowals. No more ought the mistress, in such a case, to manifest any surprise or coolness, but, on the contrary, to appear more kind and affectionate, in proportion as she acts towards her with greater frankness and confidence; to take occasion then to speak of the mercies of God, and cite the passages in the Gospel which describe them to us in the most consoling manner; to remind them that all men are subject to temptations, that the greatest saints have not been exempt from them; to read on this subject the eighteenth chapter of the first Book of "*The Imitation*," and the thirteenth of the first Book;

to make it felt that it is very difficult, in the midst of so many combats, not to make some falls; to observe that some, after these falls, continue all their life unhappy and under the weight of sin, because a false shame prevents them from opening them to their director; to say how easy it is to avow one's faults, and how happy people are when they have done so with sincerity, in order to dilate their hearts and to induce them to open them entirely if they have not done so already; but, above all, to profit by their avowals, in order to appreciate their characters, their predominant inclinations, and even their tempers, which is of the highest importance in their direction.

ARTICLE II.

What are the limits at which a mistress ought to stop, whether in the avowals her novices may make to her of their own accord, or whether in the questions which she may judge appropriate to ask them.

"It is," says Father Lafiteau, "a safe rule that must be followed by those who are entrusted with the direction of their sisters, viz., that they have absolutely no right, no inspection, no enquiry, no interrogatory to make on any matter which strictly belongs to the confessional. We are not to proceed in the manifestation that is to be made for direction, as in the declaration that must be made in the tribunal of penance. In going to confession, the sinner is rigorously obliged to declare, in matters that are of a grave nature, all the specific

acts of the sins he has committed; in the case of direction, whoever it may be, we are not obliged, at least in grave matters, to specify similar actions."

These principles once admitted, it is easy to fix the limits at which the obligation should stop for novices in the avowals they make to their mistress; they ought to unveil to her their natural repugnances, their evil inclinations, the passions that cause them involuntarily to groan, the difficulties which they experience in resisting them and overcoming them, &c., in order to put her in the way of knowing their interior, of directing them in the spiritual combat, and leading them to perfection. "Also," says St. Chantal, following in this the spirit of St. Francis de Sales, "*this obligation is only by rule, and does not bind under pain of sin;* it is of the greatest importance for novices to conform to it; nevertheless, if they do not, *they do not render themselves guilty of any fault.*"

With still greater reason novices are not obliged to make an avowal to their mistresses of the faults into which they may fall, above all, in matters that are grave, in consequence of their repugnances, their evil inclinations, and the passions which torment them. These faults are only to be declared in the tribunal of penance. "A similar manifestation," says also St. Chantal, "is neither prescribed nor counselled by the rules; it is left to the consolation and profit that we may think we ought to draw from it, to the extreme desire which we may be able to have to humble ourselves, to

the impulse of the Holy Spirit, to the motions of grace, to the free and candid disposition of each."

"Also is it to be highly presumed, on account of her profound wisdom," says Lafiteau, "that in cases even when a sister would absolutely wish to state to her mistress some of her grievous sins, the venerable Mother de Chantal does not mean that on certain delicate matters the limits of prudence should be overstepped by details in every way unbecoming to enter upon out of the tribunal of penance." As Rodriguez says, "ears that are modest must not listen to anything of that description out of confession."

But what are the questions that a mistress should address to her novices in directing them, in order to fulfil her duty, without going further by indiscreet questions? She ought to know from them, upon their vocation, if they always love the holy state which they desire to embrace, or if they have not conceived some disgust for it; in the vows which they desire to make, if they devote all their endeavours to fulfil what is the perfection of a vow, or if they confine themselves simply to perform what belongs to its substance; as to the constitutions, if they sufficiently understand them, and what are the points they find the most difficult to observe; as to their exercises of piety, how they make mental prayer, how they assist at the holy sacrifice of the mass, how they acquit themselves of their duties in choir, and make their spiritual lecture; what consolations and what lights they draw from them; what drynesses they suffer, and what fruit they gather from them; as to the virtues, to what do they devote their

efforts principally, what obstacles do they meet, and what progress do they make?

She ought to induce them to disclose themselves to her with simplicity regarding their temptations; what are in general those which they have the most combated, and what means they make use of to overcome them: as to their penances, what are the mortifications which they practise, and those which are the most profitable to them: upon the union that ought to reign among them, if they have no particular friendships that are prejudicial to the common charity, or if they do not feel an aversion for some individual parties.

With such knowledge, the mistress will be perfectly in a position to direct her novices; she ought, then, to exert herself in order to obtain it, but while guarding a wise reserve which is prescribed for her as a necessary means for acquiring it; for, if she should forget it, and seek by indiscreet questions to go beyond what prudence and duty permit her, she would expose herself to have for ever the hearts of her children shut against her, and reduce herself to the impossibility of effecting any good amongst them.

ARTICLE III.

The Mistress ought to maintain the most inviolable secrecy upon all that her novices may confide to her relative to their interior.

"The necessity for secrecy, relative to things confided to her direction, is so evident," says Father Lafiteau, "that it appears almost useless

to speak upon it. It is easy to conceive that novices would never go and open themselves to their mistress, if they did not experience an entire security in doing so. When even they might not happen to have any but celestial favours, and, in consequence, things that were consoling, to confide to her, it is certain that they would not impart them to her, except inasmuch as they might believe that their confidence would be kept secret. Let anyone thence judge what would be their reserve, if, in things that are humiliating, they were not assured that nothing would be known to transpire! At the least apprehension on this point, all the hearts of the novices would be utterly closed up; and, in order to enable the mistress to understand how fatal the consequences would be, we limit ourselves here to submitting to her the following considerations:

1st. She would annihilate, through the imprudence and the levity of her discourse, one of the points in the rule that are the most necessary for the good order and advancement of her noviciate.

The ancient fathers of the desert recommend nothing so much to their solitaries as the rendering of an account of the state of their conscience. St. Basil and St. Jerome make it a capital point in their institutes. Grounded upon their authority, and guided by such holy examples, or to express the thing better, inspired immediately by God Himself, all the holy founders of orders, as well of men as of women, have made it the basis of their Constitutions. Although they might think differently among each other, according to

the difference of the object which they proposed to themselves; they have all, nevertheless, been united together on one point, and if, through want of consideration, the mistress became the cause that it was no longer practised in her noviciate, or even in her monastery, with all the requisite security, she would destroy that which has been judged of all the means the most suited to maintain good order in it. Let her judge, thereby, of the greatness of the crime she would commit, by revealing the secret that might have been confided to her in her direction.

2nd. The mistress would prevent all the good which her novices might have derived from so holy a practice, and would stop up the signal channel of graces that God attached to it. In fact, the more a novice makes herself known to her mistress, the more she is in a condition to drive away the snares which the devil prepares for her, the more enlightened she is as to her doubts, the more easy it is for her to retrace her steps when she goes astray, and the more she is encouraged to walk in the good path. She finds, even in her determination of concealing nothing, a bridle calculated to restrain her from relapsing into the same faults.

What, above all, excites a novice to open herself for direction, is, that by these means she acquires in a sense the experience and skilfulness of her mistress, and consequently is less exposed to become the sport of the artifices of the spirit of darkness. She is less afraid of the attacks of this cruel enemy, because she is better acquainted with the means for triumphing over him. Let us add

to this the abundant blessings with which God never fails to recompence her fidelity, her courage, her submission, and her humility. Never is she more satisfied and more content in her interior, because, when she best vanquished her repugnance to say all, she finds herself immediately comforted, and, as it were, delivered from a heavy load, under the weight of which she had been ready to sink. She feels that it is the same with the maladies of the soul as with those of the body, and that we have made a good progress towards their cure, when we have made them known to a good physician. She recognizes that it is the same with the soul as with an overloaded stomach, which returns to its natural state when it has rejected the load that had oppressed it. Perhaps even does she experience (which we see confirmed by frequent examples) that by an increase of benedictions, which fidelity in discovering her pains to her mistress draws down, God causes them to cease at the moment even at which she has formed the design of opening them to her. Should the mistress then dry up the source of so many graces, by destroying, through an itching to speak, the confidence which attracted them?

Thirdly. The mistress would precipitate herself into the abyss; for if a single soul of her novices should come unhappily to perish, through having thought they were unable to discover to her the dangers that threaten, she would have to answer soul for soul.

We prefer to believe that there is not a mistress who does not comprehend the indispensable necessity of the secrecy of which we have just spoken,

and does not impose upon herself a law inviolably to observe it. But does she give it all the extent that it ought to have? Does she never reveal anything by her conduct? If a novice confides to her mistress something which gives her cause to weep, the mistress should be on her guard to manifest nothing to others that may cause her pain to be known; she should not exhibit any affliction to her even who is the object of it, out of the time of direction. She ought elsewhere, at all times, to act as if she knew nothing, and display towards her marks of particular kindness.

Although the mistress may have to confer with the superioress on summary matters relative to the interiors of the novices, she should take great precautions on this point; for what her daughters confide to her, touching their conscience, ordinarily they would not confide to the superioress, with whom they are less acquainted; often, even, if they suspected that the mistress could inform her on such a point, never would they afterwards open their hearts to her. Novices are more susceptible on this point than is thought. More than once have we had to combat the resolution of some who had made a promise that they would never again reveal their interior to their mistress, because, said they, the mistress reports everything to the superioress; and these resolutions we have not always combated with success.

ARTICLE IV.

Method which a Mistress ought to follow in order to aid her Novices to triumph over their passions, and to succeed in the spiritual life.

To triumph over our passions, we have agreed is the most glorious of all triumphs; it is also that which is most important and most indispensable in Christianity. Let us say it, however, this triumph is very rare among Christians; it is not very common even, in its fulness at least, among persons consecrated to God in the religious life. And why? Because, in order to acquire it, it costs nature much; because, in order to acquire it, we must subject ourselves to a constant vigilance, sustain a long and painful conflict, and impose on ourselves great sacrifices.

We willingly employ ourselves in reading works of piety, in the meditation of heavenly things, in the recitation of the divine office; we bend ourselves, without much repugnance, to the observance of a Rule; we content ourselves with a poor habit, with a frugal fare; we bear the weight of an employment, even painful and fatiguing, &c. But to carry, in a manner, the fire and sword even to the depths of our own heart, and to extirpate its most cherished inclinations, often even the most rooted; to engage every day and every minute in an obstinate war with them until they are subdued and made submissive to reason, until we have contracted a habit of commanding them as a master commands a slave, and places him in his

position for duty, behold what we have rarely the courage to do, and behold also why, under a habit of death, we are yet still living; behold why, in a state of perfection, we remain subject to every weakness, not without doubt gross and shameful vices, but to weaknesses unbecoming the state to which we have vowed ourselves, to weaknesses at which the saints would have blushed, and which often become for the soul a germ of death.

"And it is from these unsubdued passions," says a master of spiritual life, "that are found in the cloister so many divisions, murmurings, complaints through frivolous causes, so many indiscretions and imprudences, so many suspicions and rash judgments, so much attachment to one's own thoughts and inclinations, to things of no importance, so much impatience in humiliation and contempt; so little fervour in public and solemn prayer, so little fear and respect towards the sacred mysteries, such little fruit in confessions and frequent communions, such little feeling and such little idea of future goods, such little gratitude towards Jesus Christ, and such little solidity in the practices of devotion.

The remedy for so many evils, is to assist the novices, who are to recruit communities, in triumphing over their passions, and to form them to solid virtue; but the task is long and difficult. After having gained the confidence of her daughters by her cordiality, her discretion and fidelity in keeping the secrets of conscience which they confide to her; after having learnt as perfectly as possible their character, their inclinations, the passions which prevail in them, the mistress ought to un-

dertake it, a difficult task, and to persevere in it with all the zeal in her power. But what steps must she take? She must—

1. Assist them to know their dominant passion, which is the chief of all the others. (*Way of Solid Virtue*, pages 96 and 100.)

2. Make them understand what it is to subdue their passions, to point out to them the method they ought to follow to succeed in accomplishing it, and the time they should employ in conquering each of them. (*Idem.* page 105.)

3. She should teach them the special arms that must be employed, according to the nature of the passions, and the degree of violence which they have acquired.

4. She should calm her children in the violence of their passions, that might fill them with dismay and cast them into despair.

5. Teach them to distinguish feeling from consent.

6. Comfort and encourage them in their uneasiness and despondency.

7. Raise up their spirit with kindness, and console them when they make any fall. (*Idem.* page 171.)

8. Teach them to distinguish the instability of the heart from the instability of the will, and the subtraction of sensible graces from the subtraction of actual grace, which is necessary to conquer our enemies.

9. To enlighten and settle their minds when they persuade themselves falsely that they have gone back in virtue, because they perceive more clearly their defects.

10. To point out to them in what a true progress in virtue consists.

11. To make known to them the usual arms to which they may have recourse in order to secure the victory, such as interior and exterior mortification, prayer, examen, reading of books of piety, the presence of God, devotion to the Blessed Virgin, &c. (*Idem.* page 199.)

12. To require of them an account of the employment of these means, of their fidelity in the combat, and of the success they have had in it, or the defeat they have experienced. To animate, console, and encourage them. By means of this method the mistress will infallibly obtain the greatest fruit, she will behold her children grow up every day in humility, charity, mortification, obedience, &c., and thus present a spectacle of virtue.

ARTICLE V.

How the Mistress ought to form her Children in Humility.

The architect watches with a special care over the solidity of the foundations of an edifice, the durability of which he wishes to secure; the mistress who has at heart the perseverance of her children, ought also to watch, in order that humility, which is the foundation of the edifice of their perfection, should be solidly established in them. But how must she proceed in this?

It seems to us that some mistresses, who labour with a zeal which we are far from ignoring, in

training their children to the virtue of humility, proceed in a manner too damping and disheartening for those whom they direct. They represent to them the Son of God trampling underfoot all human greatness, accepting with gaiety of heart the most appalling humiliations and reproaches; the Blessed Virgin and all the saints walking courageously in His footsteps, and rejoicing to be judged worthy of humiliations and contempts. Follow, say they to them, follow the sublime examples; the servant is not better than the master, and those on whom he has bestowed the highest favours. Stifle in yourselves vanity, a desire of elevation and greatness; embrace reproaches, make such your delight, and you will be worthy spouses of a Crucified God.

It is plain how much these lessons contain that is saddening, gloomy, and discouraging to nature. Thus do they cast into dejection many souls who remain in their imperfection, despairing to be ever able to love and to seek what appears so opposed to all the inclinations of their heart. The mistress might proceed in a manner much less repulsive to nature. Such is our view on this matter.

We feel, with many masters of a spiritual life, that the mistress should represent to her spiritual children, that man is destined for something great, that he is allowed, even commanded by his Creater and Redeemer, to labour to become so, that he may adorn himself, seek to please, and be applauded, that it is a laudable thing to fly humiliations, contempt, and reproaches.

We can understand how these bold propositions, which are nevertheless true, would awaken the

attention, the curiosity even, of those who would hear them; how would they not dilate their heart, if afterwards their truth was clearly shown!

The mistress, developing gradually these propositions, and beginning to determine their true sense, would add: All the saints have been themselves animated by quite a celestial ambition, they have been loved, they have sought to please, to be lifted up, and to be applauded; they have had a horror of humiliations, reproaches: and every man can walk in their footsteps.

These new propositions would keep up the attention of the novices, and would begin to shed a light which would gladden their soul; the mistress would profit by it to explain at once all her thought, would make them understand that man may be loved in God and for God; that he ought, without doubt, to hate his concupiscence, his depraved inclinations, declaring war against them, and annihilate them, to hate his rebellious flesh and mortify it; but that he can and ought to love his own soul, to purify it, to adorn it with virtues, to enrich it with merits, to labour to raise it to the honour of heaven, aspire in its behalf to the first place in that abode of delights; and for this to draw upon herself the eyes of God through her fidelity, to please Him by her virtues, to captivate His esteem and benevolence by the fervour of her love, surpassing in this, so to speak, all her companions. That such was the ambition of the saints, and the object of all their endeavours, of all their cares, of all the sacrifices they imposed on themselves. Consequently, that to be perfect it is not required to stifle, to annihilate in their heart

all desire of elevation and greatness, but to give to this desire a wise and legitimate direction.

The mistress should show them how the desire to captivate the esteem of men, to please them, to be lifted up in their eyes and among them, is little worthy of the ambition of man, since such an honour is frail and transitory, is only empty smoke, and procures no real happiness. She should add, moreover, that this false honour is difficult to obtain, that some few privileged persons alone have attained it, often at the expense of true merit.

That the sole honour worthy of man's ambition, is to see, to love, to possess God, and to reign with Him. An honour which is real, solid, perfect, and eternal; an honour offered to all men indistinctly, to which all men may easily be elevated; an honour which it suffices to will and desire in an efficacious manner to assure its possession; an honour which is infallibly granted to real merit, always justly appreciated.

The mistress may then explain how man ought to fly humiliations and disgraces, and how the saints have themselves fled from them. She might show that the sole true humiliation for man is sin, which degrades him, lowers him, by dragging him down beneath the creature which is deprived of reason, by rendering him a slave of the devil, by causing him to lose the friendship of God and the throne prepared for him in heaven; that contempt of the honours and humiliations to which He subjects us upon the earth, when supported with magnanimity of soul for the love of God, wonderfully raise us in His esteem and love, and prepare us an infinite glory in heaven. Thus, the great

art of the mistress consists in giving to the natural ambition of her children a wise direction, and to make use of it as of an instrument to train them to virtue; to teach them the love which they bear themselves, to put their soul in the place of their body, the life to come in the place of the present, heaven in the place of earth, God in the place of the creature; to teach them, when their thoughts, their affections, their desires incline towards the earth, to raise them with fidelity towards the heavens, without trouble and astonishment, by those efforts so familiar to the saints, and called by them ejaculatory prayers; *God alone, and my soul alone! Heaven and eternity alone! You alone, O my God!* to accustom them to consider the humiliations, and the reproaches even which may come to them from their companions, as marks of resemblance with Jesus Christ, as means of being elevated in the eyes of God, and of adding to the brightness of the crowns that await them in heaven.

After having thus caused her children to seek after true greatness and true glory, and to awaken in their hearts a desire to attain it, the mistress ought carefully to lead them to ask her to point out to them in detail the means for acquiring it, and to help them to put them into practice.

Let her put, then, before their eyes the examples of Jesus Christ and His saints, and to exhort them to follow and imitate them. Let her prescribe them every day some interior and exterior practices of humility, exhorting them to render her often an account of their fidelity in following

them, passing a just eulogium on the most zealous, and causing thus to arise amongst them wholesome and generous emulation.

Interior Practices.—1. Contempt of themselves, based on the evil inclinations they have within their heart; upon all the faults of their life of which they are the fruit; upon the abuse which they have made of the gifts of God; upon the conviction that there is nothing good in them that does not come from God; that they have never done anything, and will never be able to do anything except by the assistance of His grace. 2. To place themselves often at the feet of their sisters. 3. To accept interiorly all humiliations, contempt, and reproaches, as what is due to them, because they have deserved them, because thereby they become like to Jesus Christ, raise themselves wonderfully in His eyes, and prepare for themselves the greatest glory in heaven. 4. To rejoice in humiliations, through the same motives, and to seek after them.

Exterior Practices.—1. Willingly and carefully to acknowledge themselves guilty of all the infidelities into which they have fallen; 2. To take everywhere the lowest place, when they can do so without disturbing the order of the noviciate; 3. To seek for the meanest employments; 4. To be thankful every time they receive an admonition or a reprimand; 5. To ask for public practices of penance.

ARTICLE VI.

How the Mistress ought to train her children to Obedience.

Obedience is the precious fruit of humility. The proud man, full of confidence in his own lights and his own wisdom, knows not what it is to submit his judgment to that of other men; and, by a necessary consequence, obedience appears to him an intolerable yoke. The humble man, on the contrary, instructed by the divine oracles, by the example of the saints, and by the fatal experience of so many souls who have gone astray by following their own judgments, distrusts himself and his passions, that may lead his judgment into error; prefers that of others, above all, when he perceives in them an unequivocal proof of virtue, and allows himself voluntarily to be guided by them. Obedience relieves him, while it spares him a painful examen, that often is exposed to error; it reassures him, because he knows that in submitting himself to the direction of those whom God has charged with guiding him, he cannot go astray; it even consoles him and fills him with joy, because he knows that obedience is more agreeable to God than all other sacrifices.

After humility, there is no virtue more recommended by holy founders of orders than obedience. Many among them, such as St. Benedict and St. Bruno, have made it the basis of their institute, and have not exacted from their disciples any other

vow than that of observing it in an inviolable manner; persuaded that all virtues being essentially bound up with this, they would infallibly accompany it, if it were practised with fidelity.

Thus would they continually exercise in this virtue those who were to place themselves under their guidance; when a subject presented himself to them for admission, they began by asking him if he was determined blindly to obey in everything which they should judge fit to command him. At the least hesitation on his part, they sent him away; if he promised to obey with docility, they gave him permission to enter the monastery, and made him pass through hard trials, above all, if they entertained any doubt as to the pliancy of his will; it is thus that St. Anthony in particular was accustomed to act.

We read in the life of St. Paul the Simple that, being presented to St. Anthony, this great man, after several refusals which had for their object to test the perseverance and humility of the neophyte, admitted him and made him undergo all the trials the most fitted to break his will. He forbids him at first to eat before sunset, and never entirely to satisfy his appetite. Paul obeyed without saying anything. Soon he occupied him even for whole days in drawing water, which he ordered him to pour away as soon as drawn; to make baskets and then pull them to pieces; to unsew his clothes and then sew them again; to tear up vegetables and then plant them again, often with their roots upwards; to carry stones from one end of a field to another, and then bring them back whence they were taken; to plant and to water shoots of dried

up trees, &c. Paul performed all these orders with the greatest fervour, the greatest respect, and the most perfect docility. One day among the rest, when he had finished some work, St. Anthony undid it himself, and ordered him to do it over again. Paul obeyed without any reply, and without asking for anything to eat, though hunger had tormented him for several days. Another time, the saint commanded him to steep some bread, for the bread of the solitaries was dry and hard; when everything was prepared for the meal, he ordered him to sing psalms with him, instead of permitting him to eat; when the prayer was finished he told him to take some repose; then he called him at midnight to go again to pray with him. Paul still endured these trials in an admirable manner, and communed with God until three hours after noon of the following day. In fine, Paul had no longer any will, and only acted by the impulse of that of Anthony.

Thus did he raise himself to the most sublime virtues, and St. Anthony formed so high an idea of him, that he proposed him to his other disciples as the most accomplished model that they could imitate; he sent him even the sick and the possessed whom he could not cure, acknowledging that this good solitary had received from God a grace more powerful than that which he had received from Him himself, and Paul never failed to obtain their cure by his prayers.

A mistress, penetrated with the spirit of her office and animated with a desire for the perfection of her children, ought herself to set everything at work to break their will, and render them perfectly

docile; but great prudence and tact are necessary. She ought:

1. To explain clearly to her children the nature of Religious obedience, what is of rigorous precept and what is of perfection. (*Voie de la Perfection*, pages 63, 65, 69 and 76.)

2. To expound to them the advantages of obedience. Agitated by passions which cause him illusions and blind him, man is exposed to errors, to continual disorders, when he follows his own light, his own judgment, and his own will. He is naturally not very generous, an enemy to sacrifices, even the most necessary to his salvation and perfection; he requires to be goaded; he is inconstant in the ways of virtue, and to be kept in them needs the will of another. Obedience procures him all these advantages.

3. To show them how reasonable obedience is. It is not a creature, a woman, whom we obey in Religion, it is God Himself, of whom mistresses and superioresses are the representatives, the lieutenants; it is to Him that we immolate our lights, our wisdom, judgment, reason, and will. What more conformable to reason? It is useful to insist strongly on this point, and often to return to it.

4. How agreeable obedience is to God. Obedience is humility reduced to practice; the humility the excellence of which the Son of God has so much extolled, which He has constantly practised Himself during His mortal life, which He recommends to us in every page of the Gospel: "*God prefers obedience to all other sacrifices that we can offer Him.*"

5. To propose the most striking examples of Jesus Christ and the saints: of Jesus Christ obedient to Joseph and Mary, obedient to His very executioners; the example of the saints, of an Arsenius, who, after having been governor of several princes, obeyed the least of the Religious of his monastery with the simplicity of a child, &c.

It would be desirable that the mistress should have sufficient ascendancy over her children to draw them to ask her of themselves often to put their obedience to the proof; that she should be able to cause to arise among them a holy emulation on this point, and that she should allow them trials as a recompense for their fidelity, their zeal for perfection, and as a mark of confidence in their humility.

The mistress ought to begin by light trials, always proportioned to the presumed strength of each, then to proceed to trials that are stronger; she ought to reprove with great sweetness and kindness those who manifest weakness, and not to appear to despair of a better success for the future. To give just praises to those who endure trials with courage and firmness, in order to encourage them and stimulate those who are less generous.

In fine, after having attempted without success all the means which persuasion and zeal could prompt, the mistress ought to reprove with energy and vigour those who should refuse to obey, then to inflict upon them penances in proportion to their faults, if they persevere in insubordination.

Persons who, after prudent trials often repeated, are not formed to obedience, are evidently not

called to the religious life. Such is the opinion of the wisest casuists.

ARTICLE VII.

How a Mistress ought to form her children to Poverty.

The mind and heart of man are naturally active, they require an object to occupy them, to captivate, and fill them in some sort. The stomach, deprived of good and wholesome nourishment, seeks to appease the hunger which oppresses it by means of aliments that are injurious and dangerous; the mind and the heart, which are not occupied and nourished in some sort by an object holy and pure, turn themselves in like manner, through an almost irresistible bent, towards objects that are evil and dangerous, and seek their food therein.

Effectually to disengage her children from the goods of the earth, and inspire them with a love of poverty, the mistress ought to propose to them another object, and inspire them with a taste for it.

1. To convince them well of the nothingness of the false goods of the earth, which some men only succeed in acquiring at the cost of a thousand sacrifices, and which they only preserve in the midst of cares and disquiets; frail goods, which a single reverse may snatch from us; deceitful goods, which do not satisfy the soul nor fill the heart, since in the midst of them the most opulent of kings only found, "*Vanity, misery, and affliction of spirit;*"

transitory goods, which we must leave so soon on the borders of the tomb.

2. In order to replace these false goods, she must present the goods of heaven, and set everything in operation to inspire a desire and love for them; goods of heaven, that are offered to all men indistinctly, which all men can acquire at the price of sacrifices less extensive and painful than those which they are forced to impose on themselves in order to obtain possession of those of the earth; goods perfect and infinite, which completely satisfy souls, and fully replenish their hearts; goods that are solid and protected from every adversity, of which all the powers of earth and hell united together cannot deprive us against our own will, which death itself cannot snatch from us, but of which, on the contrary, it secures for us the possession; goods that are imperishable, eternal as God who is their Creator and dispenser, goods which the apostles have acquired with joy, at the price of so many labours, so much sweat, such privations and sacrifices; solitaries and anchorites, at the cost of so many penances and austerities; virgins, at the cost of so many combats and struggles; confessors, at the cost of so many trials and sufferings; martyrs, at the cost of their blood; which all the saints, in fine, have preferred to all that the world offers as most precious and alluring.

The mistress ought to develop these thoughts with all the zeal, persuasiveness, and ardour of which she is capable, and often to repeat them; she ought to remind her spiritual children that whoever amongst them shall have practised poverty

in the greatest perfection, will be enriched in heaven with the most precious and boundless treasures. She ought also to endeavour to establish amongst them, on this point, a holy rivalship, and to lead them to ask themselves for some practices relative to this virtue, after the example of Louis Gonzaga and Stanislas de Koska.

3. After having thus prepared their hearts, the mistress ought to explain what there is of rigorous precept in the vow of poverty, and which consists in receiving nothing, keeping nothing, giving nothing, lending nothing, borrowing nothing, altering in nothing the disposal of property, destroying nothing, appropriating nothing, even of the goods of the monastery which are destined for our use; in a word, to dispose of nothing without the leave of the superior. (*Voie de la Perfection*, p. 25.) She will make known to them the different degrees by which they may attain the perfection of religious poverty. (*Méme Ouvrage*, p. 31.)

The mistress then will be able to grant the most fervent some exercises of this virtue by way of reward, whether as to dress, furniture, or eatables; but she ought to take great care, on this last point, to refer to nothing that might be injurious to their health or constitution. She will commend and encourage those who show themselves the most faithful and zealous, and inflict prudent corrections on those who, after several charitable admonitions, should fail in any essential way to practise holy poverty.

ARTICLE VIII.

How a Mistress ought to train her spiritual Children in Chastity.

The mistress ought to proceed, on this delicate point, in almost the same way as on the preceding subject; but she must give less development to her thoughts, and limit herself to the chastity of the heart, which, in religion, ought to belong to God without any division.

1. She will recall the imperfections, the defects, and even the frailty of creatures, in the love of whom Solomon, Magdalen, Augustine, and so many others, only found a void, slavery and remorse; unhappy love, which dragged them to the brink of the eternal abyss. She ought rigorously to limit herself to these generalities, lest the imagination of her children, always too lively, should work in a dangerous manner.

2. She will present to them, as the object of their love and affection, the perfect Being, and will strive to paint before them, in the strongest colours, His eternal love for us, His benefits in the order of nature and of grace, His infinite perfections, the eternal recompenses which He is preparing for us, &c. The mistress will be able, on this occasion, to read for them the article of "*La Voie de la Perfection*," p. 138. She will discourse with them on this divine love, making them to understand well that it does not consist in a certain sensibility of the carnal heart, but,—1. In the faithful and generous accomplishment of the duties

which God imposes on us, and in the rigorous avoidance, even in the smallest things, of what He forbids us. She will recommend to them, when their heart is inclining towards the creature by painful remembrances or humiliating desires, to raise it, without trouble, towards God, by that ejaculatory prayer so familiar to the saints: "*You alone, O my God, You alone in my heart! My God and my All.*"

In order to instruct her children upon the nature and obligations of this vow, the mistress will be able to read to them, "*La Voie de la Perfection*," pp. 37, 40, 45, et 49. For temptations that are opposed to it, consult "*La Voie de la Solide Vertu*," p. 137, and the following.

3. For fear of stirring the hearts of her children, the mistress ought to restrict herself rigorously, except in some very rare cases, from giving them exterior marks of carnal friendship, such as to embrace them, to take hold of their hands, &c., although they should even earnestly solicit her to do so. Persons who have a tender heart are greatly disposed to attach themselves in a human manner to those who have their confidence in their troubles and their combats, and from whom they receive spiritual consolations. If, instead of acquiescing in the counsels of prudence which we here give, the mistress yielded to the desires of her children, and with greater reason, if she had the misfortune to encourage them, she would produce the most fearful ravages in their hearts, stifle in them a spirit of piety, and make them lose their vocation: we speak here in the name of experience.

In adopting even the precautions which we are

stating, the mistress, more than once, will perceive in her children traces of too sensible an affection for herself, above all, if God has favoured her with some exterior gifts, and this affection will not fail to keep them back in the path of virtue. Without doubt, she ought not to be unduly alarmed at it, particularly if she has not given any cause for it by imprudence; but she ought to be greatly on her guard not to foster it, either by softness or by self-love; she ought, on the contrary, by a wise reserve, to nip it in the bud, and if they come and make any overture on this point, to give wise advice, as we have suggested above, in order that the person affected by this evil may accustom herself to put God in place of His creature by means of the ejaculatory prayer which we have recommended: "*You alone! O my God!*"

The mistress ought to watch with no less care that no intimacy or sensual friendship be formed among her children, and for this purpose she will severely forbid all private conversations and all confidence among the sisters, especially as to what may concern their interior; she will prohibit in a manner not less rigorous every species of manifestation of sensual friendship, such as embraces and every kind of playing with the hands.

Experience induces us to attach very great importance to these counsels; several mistresses, through having neglected them, have been the cause of many faults, and even of the ruin of a vocation for which they will have to render an account to God.

ARTICLE IX.

How a Mistress ought to train her Spiritual Children to mutual Charity, to Regularity, Silence, and an Interior life.

We shall dwell but for a short space on these different points, which we have treated already elsewhere, and of which the mistress understands the importance sufficiently: we will only call them to her mind.

1. On mutual charity, that she ought to devote her attention to two things; the first, which is of great importance, is to establish amongst her spiritual children a sincere cordiality, to accustom them to love one another in God, and for God, to aid each other in their wants, to console one another in their troubles, to encourage one another in the practice of perfection, to bear patiently with one another in their defects. If any misunderstanding should manifest itself amongst them, the mistress ought immediately to appease it, to oblige her who should have wounded or offended another, immediately to make her suitable reparation, &c. (*Voie de la Perfection*, p. 170.)

The second thing over which the mistress ought to watch on this point, is that general charity should never be disturbed by private friendships, which the saints style with just reason the pest and the scourge of communities. (*Idem.* p. 164.)

2. Upon regularity, which being, according to the saints, the nerve of the monastic life, the

nourishment and support of fervour, the mistress ought to establish it and watch that it may reign perpetually in her noviciate; to strengthen and even perfect her spiritual children in it, and to denounce with a wise firmness those who after several admonitions should continue to show themselves unfaithful to it. But, above all, let her never forget that she ought, upon this point as well as upon others, to give an example to her children. (*Voie de la Perfection*, p. 94.)

3. Upon silence, which, being the soul and the guardian of the interior life, the mistress ought to oblige her children to observe it in an inviolable manner during the hours that it is prescribed by the Rule; to bring often before their minds its importance and advantages, to admonish them with charity when they show themselves unfaithful to it, and even, in case of need, to inflict salutary penances upon them, in order to put an end to their infidelities and prevent the contagion of scandal.

4. In fine, upon the interior life, that this sublime life being the immediate object of all the religious orders, since we only separate ourselves from the world in order to be closely united to God, the mistress ought to set every engine in operation to establish its reign in the souls of her children, to address them frequent instructions on this point, to lay down for them practices which are calculated to train them to it, and to make them render an account to her at stated times.

CHAPTER III.

SPECIAL RULES APPLICABLE FOR THE DIRECTION OF EACH NOVICE, ACCORDING TO HER PARTICULAR WANTS.

The first business of a skilful architect is to examine the ground on which he has to build, to remark its advantages, in order to profit by them, and its defects, in order to correct them, and adapt them, if the thing is possible, to the accomplishment of his designs; such ought to be the principal care of a mistress. God has confided souls to her, in order that she may second the design He has formed to make of them a temple, a sanctuary, an asylum which should be consecrated to Him; she ought to begin by examining the situation of the place in which she is to raise that spiritual edifice, what there is favourable to His designs, and what there is defective, in order to adapt them and modify them to advantage: that is to say, that she ought seriously to examine the dispositions of the children intrusted to her direction; their good qualities in order to develop them; their humour, their nature, and their imperfections, in order to correct the evil of which they are capable, in order to turn it into good.

Has not God Himself a regard to our personal character in order to employ it in accordance with

the designs He has on each one's salvation? Does He not communicate in a different manner the succour of His grace; to some by the attraction of His holy love, to some again by the terror of His threats, to some with sweetness, and to others with a strong power, according to the natural complexion of each of us? He uses precautions in order to facilitate and to sweeten the work of our sanctification; the mistress ought also to place herself in a position, by a profound study of the dispositions of each of her children, to second in every way the designs of God upon them.

What a variety of position and character there are among so many spiritual children! Some scarcely have attained the age of puberty, others have arrived at a mature age, others can reckon upon a good number of years to which they have arrived; some have been so happy as to preserve their baptismal innocence; several, tossed about by the storm, have been on the brink of shipwreck; several, even, perhaps owe their salvation to the mercy which has given them a plank after shipwreck: these have the happiest dispositions for their perfection; these find in their heart even the gravest obstacles to salvation, and only reach that term after the most painful combats. Some, in fine, have pride for their predominant enemy, others an inclination for sensual pleasures. Is it possible to conduct all these souls to perfection by the same way, to apply the same remedy for such distinct diseases? The thing is as impossible as it would be to cure all the corporal maladies to which man is subject, by the aid of the same beverage. The mistress ought to lead each soul to perfection

ny the path in which God Himself calls her, and she ought to apply to each malady the remedy that is proper for it; we shall endeavour to help her in the following article to accomplish this difficult task, by placing before her eyes some of the wise lessons of the masters of a spiritual life.

ARTICLE I.

How the Mistress ought to Direct the Novices who are still young and inexperienced.

We may consider the novices, says a master of spiritual life, in regard to their life in the world which they leave, and in regard to that which they choose in the cloister; some quit the world at a mature age, and others at a more tender age; both one and the other carry into monasteries facilities and obstacles, favourable and unfavourable qualities, and it is of great importance to discern them well, because on this discernment depends ordinarily all that follows.

The novices who enter very young into monasteries have a greater facility in allowing themselves to be guided, more simplicity and innocence; but they have also more childishness and levity, and if we content ourselves with training them solely to the exercises of the monastery, without giving them a solid instruction, their piety will become feeble in proportion as they advance in years; their docility will disappear with their childish ways. They will neither know the world, nor the reasons for quitting it; they will find themselves religious without knowing why they have become

such, and the smallest disgusts in their state will be able to make them repent of having embraced it; for we can hardly count upon the sentiments of piety that frequently appear so lively and so tender in young persons, they are rarely sincere, the desire to gain approbation is often their principle, and if they are better, they are often so weak, that everything is capable of causing them to vanish, unless the light and a strong conviction of the truth do not strengthen and shield them.

Mistresses of novices ought then to bring to the direction of these different sorts of persons a care adapted to their special wants, that is to say, in regard to their inexperience, their weakness, and their flexibility of character.

1. In regard to their inexperience. To make them know the world, the vanity of its deceitful pleasures, which pass away with the rapidity of lightning, and only leave behind emptiness and remorse; the vanity of its honours, which dazzle the eyes without filling the heart, and, without satisfying the soul, breed jealousies and rivalries, bring on in their train disgusts and weariness; the vanity of its riches, which are only vile dust that the wind of adversity blows away, which only engender cares during life and regrets at death. To make them know the world with its duplicity, its injustices, and its perfidies, with its impiety, its corruptions, and scandals, in fine, with all the dangers to which their innocence and virtue are exposed in it.

Then, to point out to them the advantages of the religious life, the ramparts it opposes to the corruptions of vice, in order to prevent it from pene-

trating into our hearts; the powerful arms which it puts into our hands to combat our enemies, the abundant and varied succours which it places at our disposal, in order to elevate us to the most heroic virtues, the profound peace which it causes to spring up in our souls, the abundance and solidity of the goods which it procures for us, &c.

But, in order to give these instructions a solid support, the mistress ought to engrave well upon the memory of her young novices the dogmas of our holy religion, which are the foundation of the whole spiritual edifice; its sublime morality; to remind them often of the nature of man, his noble destinies, the hideousness of sin, the beauties and charms of virtue, the magnificence of the rewards which are promised to it, the rigour of the chastisements reserved for crime, the shortness of life, the uncertainty of the hour of death, &c.

2. The mistress ought to subject these young novices to a direction conformable to their weakness, that is to say, to exercise over them a very particular vigilance, to stifle in their hearts the germ of evil passions as soon as they manifest themselves, instil into them that of the contrary virtues, and, above all, those for which they perceive in them the most favourable dispositions. She ought to treat those hearts that are so impressionable, with a truly maternal charity, and, at the same time, with all the assurance and ascendancy which her age, experience, and the authority of her office confer upon her; by turns encouraging their success, and punishing their transgressions.

3. In fine, the mistress ought to direct them in

a manner according to their changeableness of character. They are feeble and inconstant in the path of good; their brain is as yet soft, the good impressions which are engraven upon them appear at first sight to be profound, but they disappear as easily as they are formed; it is necessary then to return often, and for a long time, to the attack, in order to produce any stable effect; it is necessary to try them more frequently, more closely, and for a longer period than others, before admitting them to the Religious habit, and, above all, to Profession; it is necessary to wait till time and age itself should have sufficiently strengthened them.

ARTICLE II.

How a Mistress of Novices ought to direct Postulants who are more advanced in age, who have lived in the midst of the world, and know its dangers.

Persons who leave the world a little late in life, and after having known it, have ordinarily, says the author already quoted, more maturity and solidity of spirit, more knowledge of what they quit, more experience of their own weakness, more respect for religion and virtue, more conviction that retreat and example are necessary, that penance and humility are virtues which the world does not know; they have either more desire of being saved, or more fear, at least, of being lost. We must put to profit these dispositions and cultivate them, and for this purpose endeavour to

know them well, to know, if it is possible, what has touched the heart of these persons, what has determined them to take such a step, what has subsisted for a long time, what they have not been able to extinguish, although they have fought against it, what was enfeebled when piety became feeble, what was weakened when piety had a stronger hold.

It would be well also to know what they found most to regret in leaving, what they clung to the longest time, of what they were most afraid; for all these things discover the depth of the heart, the root of the temptations that might arise, the source of weaknesses, the secret obstacle to an entire conversion, the profound and hidden opposition to the Spirit of God and His graces.

It would be very useful to know the principal faults into which they have fallen, the perils in which they have been encompassed, the occasions in which the assistance of God has been most evident; for we may draw from all this knowledge a more certain light, and one more suitable for personal wants. But we must avoid, in this investigation, even the appearance of curiosity; prudence is absolutely necessary to superintend these kinds of inquiries, and that the effusion of a novice should be the result of his confidence, and not the artifice of her mistress. Useless and too circumstantial details should be avoided; for, as we have said elsewhere, the question is not to have the instructions of a confessor. These details are not necessary except on two occasions, the first when the novice desires us to help her with her confession, the second when she consults upon

some point of her life that troubles and disturbs her; for then the necessity of giving her advice imposes the duty of knowing exactly what the matter is.

Persons who enter into monasteries after having known the world, have, on the one hand, good dispositions and facilities; and on the other, difficulties and defects which require a particular study. They are upset by the little observances and matters which have no sufficiently apparent connection with the law of God. The imperfections of their sisters scandalize them, disgust them, make them lose the high idea which they had of a monastery, where they expected to find nothing but what was holy and perfect. They open themselves with more pain, and exact a virtue without defect in their mistress to give her their confidence. They are led to pass a judgment upon every one, and more on their superiors than any one else; love of liberty and independence continue a long time, and renders the yoke of obedience painful; they accustom themselves with difficulty to a line of conduct in which the law alone is communicated to them, if they never are informed of the reason or the motive. They have an esteem for themselves, and they wish others to esteem them. They have sometimes a very high opinion of their intellect, their knowledge, and of their virtue; and nothing wounds them so much as humiliation, which bears the least appearance of contempt. I do not speak of manners too worldly, too light, too haughty, too affected; these defects are visible, and the remedies are known.

In regard to other defects of which I have

just spoken, (the facility of passing judgments, &c.) as they are more hidden, more excusable, according to human reason, more settled in the heart, they are also more difficult to cure. The means for succeeding in this, is not by combating them in front, at least in the beginning, but admonish them that there are, in the holiest retreats, things which may weaken persons who are already weak, but which increase faith and vigilance in those who are cognisant of human frailty, and the design that God only has to heal His elect slowly, and to try the strength of some by the weakness of others. It is good to complain sometimes of their not being sufficiently aware that the sacrifice of obedience would be a trifling matter, if those whom we ought to obey were perfect; of their not yet seeing how much practices, simple in appearance, are calculated to heal the swelling of a wisdom and reason which before God are but folly, to lead them to avow the aversion they have for all that humbles them, and to discover thus the secret and profound wound of their heart, which may continue till death, if it is not early remedied, and which renders sometimes useless the works of penance; to treat with kindness, and even to console those who make a sincere avowal of their pride, of their sensibility, and of the pain which they feel in repressing their opposition to humiliation, and their desire to please and gain admiration.

We employ then with more success powerful truths and bitter and difficult remedies, because we have gained the heart, convinced the mind, because a moderate virtue suffices to respect great

charity when it is known, although it be not indulgent.

ARTICLE III.

How the Mistress ought to guide those of her Children who have had the happiness to preserve their baptismal innocence.

"There are," says Father Pinamonti, "two sorts of innocence; the one has its source in the absence of strong and ardent passions, in the happiness of a good disposition, the other in a superabundance of extraordinary graces."

Persons who possess the first appear to be ignorant of what evil is, but they but little know also what it is to do good. They have never left, it is true, the right path; but what efforts have they made to advance in it? They have been preserved intact from the defilement of sin, but what virtues have they acquired? What strength and what energy are there in them to sustain them in grace?

Two circumstances will assist us in appreciating the character of these two classes of the just:—1. When some authority is given them over others, it is rare that they know how to compassionate their feebleness: as they have not felt in themselves the effects of human weakness, they see it in others with the utmost astonishment; they do not conceive that this weakness can merit any other thing but indignation, and they verify in themselves, by their harshness, those words of St.

Gregory: "*True virtue is compassionate, but false is easily irritated.*"

2. If they happen to fall into any fault, (and the hidden pride which renders them pitiless towards others, leads them sometimes even to the brink of the abyss,) it is very difficult to raise them up again and to replace them in the right path, because they have no energy either for good or for evil, nor to tear themselves from it when they have fallen into it. Their life, for a long time exempt from sins, had become insensibly, as it were, a pledge of impeccability, and it seemed to them that their frail innocence was a buckler proof against every dart. In the surprise of an unforeseen fall, they run the greatest risk of adding to this misfortune despair and perseverance in sin.

Supposing that such souls continue to live in innocence, we can scarcely expect anything but ordinary virtue. They will not be wholly dissipated and worldly, but they will never be interior; they will maintain themselves in a certain medium, in which there is little capacity for receiving the impressions of grace. Nevertheless, as innocence is always invaluable, we must never fail to esteem its possession in them. It is above all useful to guide them with much gentleness, for, being usually of a timid nature, the least rough speech perhaps would suffice to alarm them and take away the confidence which they ought to have in her who directs them. By insinuating manners, on the contrary, we succeed in preserving them in purity of heart, and even of enabling them to attain perfection in it.

The second kind of innocence has its source in a superabundance of extraordinary graces. Those who possess it are chosen souls whom we are happy to be able to receive into a noviciate; such privileged souls are truly like angels, both from the purity and the intelligence which are common to them. With these souls the mistress has to labour upon a foundation on which the Holy Spirit desires to construct a work worthy of Him, because He sees nothing in it that is opposed to His designs, but she has two stumbling blocks to avoid.

The first would be to open their eyes to what constitutes crime, a monster which was always unknown to them, and which it is desirable they should never know. It has sometimes happened that upright souls who were in happy ignorance of certain disorders, when interrogated by a not very discreet mistress, have gained thereby a knowledge of evil, which they would never have known otherwise, and of painful and dangerous temptations to which they would never have been exposed. In order to avoid this shoal, the mistress must use very great reserve when she thinks it beneficial to put them a question on certain delicate subjects.

The second inconvenience would be to make too many observations to this class of souls on their spiritual riches. The best means of preserving a treasure is to hide it; this precaution is preferable to all the safeguards to which we may confide it.

It is, nevertheless, but proper that persons who are so privileged should know sufficiently the

nature of the prerogative which God has bestowed upon them, in order to be grateful to their benefactor; but it is also very important that they should be told that they are not the more esteemed on this account. They must only be made to feel that God is the author of all good, that we are, of ourselves, nothing but misery and emptiness; that God demands much of those who have received much of Him, that He feels Himself deeply offended by the least negligence after having honoured them with His greatest gifts, that He becomes cold in their regard, if a high virtue is not sought to be attained to correspond with His distinguished favours; that, without this, such favours are like well adorned palaces which do not render richer to any extent him who possesses them, when there is not a large estate attached to them.

By the help of little humiliations, which the mistress should know how to manage, and of humility which should be their fruit, she will begin to raise the edifice of their perfection. These daughters, being already disposed to receive the impressions of grace, will advance admirably under her direction in the way of sanctity.

ARTICLE IV.

How the Mistress ought to guide those who have not had the happiness of preserving their baptismal innocence.

There are few souls, even among those who manifest a desire to consecrate themselves to God in the religious life, who have preserved in its integrity their baptismal innocence, above all, in the age in which we live. The Lord, who did not repel Peter and Paul in spite of their past faults, but who, after their repentance, raised them to the dignity of Apostles, and has made them instruments of His mercy; who did not reject Magdalen, notwithstanding the disorders of her life, but who, in consideration of the ardour of her love, has pardoned her, has replenished her with highly privileged graces, and admitted her to behold Him the first after His resurrection; who did not reject Augustine, in spite of the licentiousness of his youth, but has raised him after his conversion to the dignity of Prince of His Church; God, in fine, who finds more joy on the occasion of the conversion of one sinner, than at the sight of the perseverance of ninety-nine just; who forgets entirely the sins of man when he returns sincerely to Him, does not exclude from the society of His spouses those whose robe of innocence has been washed in the bath of penance, and purified in the blood of His Son.

The mistress ought not to be astonished or alarmed when any one of her daughters, in a

sacred outpouring which can only have as a principle, a confidence which she has known how to inspire, a humility and desire of their perfection, make an avowal to her of the weaknesses of their past life. Such an avowal is infinitely precious to her, for it gives her the means of labouring with success for the spiritual advancement of those who make it; several of those who are less confiding have not lived in greater innocence, and their want of frankness, without rendering them more pure, will render the work of their perfection more difficult.

Among those who have lost their baptismal innocence, we may distinguish two classes; to wit, those who have a great and profound sorrow for their past faults, and those who have only a feeble and slight regret for them. The direction to be employed by the mistress towards these two classes of persons is very different.

1. Those who have a great and profound sorrow for the faults of their past life. Between these, again, it is of advantage to make a distinction. "In some, this sorrow has for principle," says Father Pinamonti, "the knowledge of the divine goodness, and then they feel themselves as if sinking under a sweet but powerful grief for having offended a God infinitely amiable. This is a penitent love. In others, sorrow arises from an intimate knowledge of their sins, which appear as spectres more hideous than demons, then sorrow is nothing but bitterness, gall, and wormwood; a different method of direction should be employed for a sorrow which is itself so different."

With regard to those whose sorrow is as sweet

and consoling as it is profound, it is proper to recommend them to receive these divine caresses with humble confusion, like one guilty of high treason who should see himself loaded with favours by his sovereign, instead of being chastised according to her merits. "What!" said St. Teresa, in the midst of the spiritual consolations which she tasted, "What! oh, my God, do You so soon forget my faults? Do You repay the offences which I have committed against You, by the purest delights! Ah! permit not a soul loaded with Your benefits ever to lose sight of what it has been, and what it still is in its depths."

The mistress will suggest similar sentiments to such classes of penitents. Let them, when experiencing during their compunction, sweetnesses reserved for the most cherished souls, enter immediately into themselves and judge themselves wholly unworthy of them; let them have some hesitation in tasting them, let them, however, thank the Lord for them, and annihilate themselves at the same time in His divine presence. It is not meet, in effect, to seek at once to treat familiarly with God after having lived in sin, or after having made some considerable fall. It is good to humble this description of persons, in reminding them of their past faults, in the fear that they may suffer themselves to be surprised by pride; but much precaution should be used at the commencement, lest through desiring to shut all entry to the spirit of pride, the door should be opened to distrust and to scruples.

For those whose sorrow is only a chalice of bitterness, the mistress should recommend them not

to fix their thoughts to such a degree on the depth of their wounds, without also, from time to time, dwelling on the depth and extent of the divine mercies; on the one side, they will humble themselves and blush with shame at the sight of their misery, and on the other side, they will preserve always a confidence in God, and will not lose courage. "It is in this that the force of a Christian consists," says St. Thomas.

The mistress ought to give the same counsel to two other sorts of persons. The first are melancholy spirits, whose courage she may not know sufficiently how to raise up. As they only feed their minds with sad and fretful thoughts, the weight of their temperament might at last drag them down to despair.

The second are those who, after having a long time walked in the path of virtue, come to make heavy falls, in punishment of some secret pride, and by a permission of Providence, whose intentions are always for our advantage. It is in these circumstances that the mistress should have more than ever recourse to motives of confidence in God.

Woe to the soul, directed by an imprudent mistress, who should chafe and exclaim at first over their fall; who, instead of putting with joy the stray sheep upon her shoulders, should ill-treat it and cause it to go back irritated to the sheep-fold; *it would be*, to use the comparison of the Psalmist, "*as if you were thrusting down a leaning wall and a tottering fence.*" At the moment, then, in which this just person who has become a sinner is opening her interior to her mistress about her infi-

delity, she ought to hear her in tranquillity, and take care not to intimidate her; she ought to encourage her in her distress, and answer her that she will rise up once more with a fresh increase of merits. "*All things*," says the Holy Spirit, "*concur together for the advantage of those who love God*;" "sins even contribute to it," say the holy doctors, "because grace knows how to extract a salutary antidote from poison."

Nevertheless, the mistress will do three things in regard to those persons who have the misfortune to make any fall:

First, she will inspire them with a great humility, seeing that the Lord has only the custom of being severe towards the proud, and that the ordinary cause of our falls is a secret esteem we have for ourselves.

Secondly, she will cause them to draw, even from their fall, an additional confidence in the goodness of God, by showing them that God could not better make them know how dear they are to Him, than by seeking them even after they have so cowardly abandoned Him.

Thirdly, in order to confirm them after their return to God, she will give them all the preservatives possible against a relapse; these preservatives are to watch over their senses, to be more attentive to the movements of their interior, and, above all, to fortify within themselves the feeble point through which they were surprised, attacked and conquered.

2. Persons who have not preserved their innocence, and who have only a weak and slight sorrow for their past faults. These classes of persons

should be divided into two classes; some have only a limited sorrow in appearance, and others the same in reality.

Some have only a limited sorrow in appearance. There are persons who cannot naturally shed tears, or give other sensible marks of grief, whatever may happen to them. The mistress might be misguided in judging of the heart by the eyes, and imagine to herself that sorrow is wanting because it does not display itself externally. True sorrow is interior and not in the senses, and whoever requires it to be sensible is mistaken. The mistress will confine herself, then, in judging as to true sorrow by the real shame her spiritual children shall have of their weaknesses, by the sincere horror which they conceive at the sight of the God of goodness, whom they have offended, by the firm resolution in which they are, of not falling again into it with the assistance of grace by the happy dispositions which she may remark in them to serve Him with more fervour, fidelity and exactness, than they have done heretofore.

But there are other persons who have in reality a very slight degree of sorrow for their past weaknesses, who are very little troubled about them, and no more think of repairing them than if they had never fallen into them.

The mistress ought to exhort this description of persons to a profound humility, and to facilitate its practice for them; to compunction of heart; to gratitude towards God; to interior and exterior mortification; to distrust of themselves; to a constant watchfulness over the passion which has been the source of their past falls, and prescribe

them the practices to which they ought to have recourse, in order to keep it under the yoke and to triumph over fresh assaults in which it might involve them afterwards; for it is very rare but that sooner or later the spirit of darkness may attempt to awaken the passion which has subdued us.

ARTICLE V.

How the Mistress ought to conduct herself towards the Novices who are disturbed by Scruples.

"Scruples," says Father Pinamonti, "are very injurious usually to exercises of piety, and even sometimes cast the soul down so as to sink it into despair." This disease of the soul is much more difficult to cure than to know. We are not ignorant that scruples are a vain fear, an excessive dread that what is not a sin may be one. We also know the symptoms of this malady, which are reduced to four heads; 1. To change one's feelings without ceasing upon the slightest appearance, judging sometimes unlawful and sometimes permitted what they are going to do or what they have done; 2. To feed oneself with reflections that are extravagant about the most trifling circumstances in their actions; 3. To act with I know not what trouble, that takes away the attention and constrains freedom; 4. To show much attachment to one's own sense, without seeking for the reasons; and after having consulted many persons, only to refer to oneself. By these marks, we may without difficulty know a scrupulous soul. But who shall

pretend to boast of having cured many who were affected with this evil? Notwithstanding, it is neither incurable nor equally obstinate in all. The mistress ought to know well the varieties it presents both in its principle and its nature, and the different remedies that are proper to apply to it.

We distinguish three sorts of scruples; some come from God, who permits that we should be subjected to this trial; others come from our own selves; the last, in fine, come from the spirit of darkness.

1. We may say it with truth, there are scruples that come to us from God: not that God is the author of our illusions, but because He does not give us the proper light to scatter them; for in the same manner as the absence of the sun hinders our carnal eyes from perceiving material objects, the absence of celestial light hinders the eyes of our soul from perceiving spiritual truths and making a sound judgment upon them. God, then, punishes certain souls, by permitting that they should be given up to an infinity of scruples, and allows their past boldness to be succeeded by an excessive timidity, as the sacred writings seem to tell us: "*I will send fear in their hearts in the countries of their enemies; the sound of a fly leaf shall terrify them; and they shall flee as it were from the sword; they shall fall, when no man pursueth them.*"

The mistress will know this kind of scruples by the motives that cause them, by the effects which they produce, and the time which they last. The fear of displeasing God is ordinarily the motive

for the disquiet of those who are affected with such scruples. Although this fear may exceed due bounds, it proceeds, nevertheless, from a good principle, which is at the bottom charity.

The effects of these principles are a greater horror for sin, a more exact shunning of occasions, and a more thorough reformation of one's past life. It is just in effect that she who has lived under the slavery of sin, and is delivered from it, should fly with all imaginable care the peril that may entangle her again in it.

As to the time that these scruples may last, commonly it is not very long; God does not continue to prove this class of His servants, when He sees them perfectly submissive to Him. We read of several saints that they were tormented in this way at the beginning of their conversion. Trials rendered them pure, like the agitation of the sea purges it of its impurities. After having thus purified them, the storm ceased in them, and peace prevailed. These scruples are very painful for her who is disturbed by them; but they are useful to them, and are less difficult to heal.

2. There are other scruples that arise from our own selves; these scruples are ordinarily more tenacious and difficult to cure. Certain spirits form them to themselves naturally, and seem to undertake to torment themselves. But if ignorance or too great a disquiet is joined to this natural disposition, we cannot say how much it increases the evil, and causes prejudice to the soul. Persons proceed even so far through it as to neglect all their exercises of piety, to be incapable of anything whatever, and to lose their good sense. A

little solicitude of mind might serve to waken a lukewarm soul; but if she is extravagant and keeps no bounds, so far from being in a condition to act, it becomes almost impossible to live. These scruples become an embarrassment of mind, like the Egyptian darkness hindered the movements of the body: so long as the darkness lasted, *no man saw his brother nor moved from the place where he was;* and so long as the perplexity lasts of which we are speaking, the soul remains in some sort immoveable. Persons scrupulous by constitution become known by the profound melancholy that besets them, by their timidity in everything, and by their vain subtility of spirit in reasoning about everything.

3. The third kind of scruples is the work of the demon, who observes, as much as is in his power, the state of the conscience; who examines if it is too broad or too confined, in order to attack the soul by its feeble side, and suddenly to surprise it. Two sorts of persons are sheltered from these scruples; great sinners and great saints: for with great saints, perfect charity surmounts fear: and, with great sinners, malice prevails over fear.

The effects which these scruples produce, are, 1. To cool a person in the practice of good, to represent to him evils as incurable, and lead him at last to despair; 2. To make him fall into a strange contradiction with himself; for it is seen that among these sorts of persons they severely interdict themselves certain things, and easily allow themselves many others. Like to those Pharisees who, by a principle of conscience, would not enter the house of Pilate, and who

made no scruple of demanding the death of a man whom they knew was innocent.

Prayer and obedience, according to the opinion of all the fathers of a spiritual life, are the two surest remedies to cure every sort of scruples. In prayer, the soul that is disturbed will implore the assistance of God with confidence, humility and perseverance, and she will surely obtain it, if she adds to prayer a blind obedience to those who hold the place of God over her.

The mistress ought, then, to make a scrupulous soul well understand that her salvation depends on the submission of her will to that of her director and the superiors who govern her; that her true happiness consisting in following the divine will, she has no rule more sure to enable her to know if she does it, than to obey those who speak to her in the name of the Lord, and to obey them in all that is not sin; that with this assistance she has no longer to fear going astray, and that, without this assistance, all others she may imagine remain useless; that all the saints have known no shorter path to reach heaven, than that of obedience; that they made more of the advice of their superiors and directors, than even of the lights which they thought came certainly from on high.

If the mistress can convince the scrupulous persons of these truths, and persuade them that the obedient soul is assured of triumph, she will have made a great step towards her cure. But in order to succeed in this, it is necessary she should manifest a great determination, for should she hesitate ever so little, speak with a timid air, show herself

embarrassed, irresolute, she will increase the fear of the scrupulous party more than lift up her courage.

As scrupulous persons are always reverting to the point of the integrity of their confessions, the mistress will rigorously enjoin them to defer to the decisions of their directors, relative to the time which they ought to devote to the examen of their conscience, and to the points to which they ought to be limited in the searching out of their faults, relative to faults that are forgotten, and to those which they would not believe they have explained enough, &c.

The mistress will order the scrupulous to fly idleness, affected solitude, and association with those who are under the influence of the same malady. All this contributes to give rise to perplexities, to keep up the mind in its uncertainties, and to confirm it in its obstinacy. By occupying it always in one way or other, we may distract it from objects which disturb it; we take away from the enemy of our repose, the occasions for troubling us through distressing phantoms, and to spread in us the darkness of which he is the father.

The mistress will observe the moment in which the scrupulous soul appears to her in a state that is more tranquil, to represent to her with kindness and firmness what harm she is causing by her unjust alarms and unreasonable disquiets. Alas! what becomes of virtue in the midst of these agitations of mind? What befals the good grain in the midst of the storms, which do not fail to stifle it? At first Christian hope is, by degrees,

upset; the scrupulous soul, always fearing when there is no reason to fear, falls, by its senseless alarms, into a state like to that of the Israelites terrified and discouraged by the exaggerated recitals of their timid spies. May the Lord not cause you to enter that land! In fact, nature not being able to suffer for a long time a position that is too troublesome, soon seeks to set itself free, whatever the consequence; and it passes from the extremity of scrupulosity to the excess of relaxation and the abandonment of virtue; or at least, if people do not carry things to such an excess, they never serve but with servile fear the God whose will it is to be served in peace, confidence, and love.

ARTICLE VI.

How the Mistress ought to conduct herself towards those of her Spiritual Children who have disquiets about the Confessions which they have made in the world.

It is incontestably to the director that it appertains to pronounce upon the suitable time for general confessions, because he alone has a right to sound all the depths of conscience, and because he alone, generally speaking, knows all its secrets. Nevertheless, the novices often confide to their mistress the disquiets which disturb them; often even they discover to her, at least in part, their principle; it is useful then that she should know —1. What are the circumstances in which it is necessary, useful, or dangerous, to make general confessions; 2. What counsels she ought to give

when they consult her on this point; 3. What conduct she ought to adopt when the director permits, requires, or forbids general confessions.

1. What are the circumstances in which general confessions are necessary, useful, or dangerous?

General confessions are necessary, first, for those who through a false shame have concealed or disguised their sins, either as to their species, or their number, or aggravating circumstances. This case is frequent among young persons of the female sex; experience has taught us this; there are many of them, even among those who actually give unequivocal proofs of sincere piety, who, as to the past, have not manifested in the avowal of their weaknesses the candour and sincerity that are necessary. Timidity, shame, or want of confidence, are ordinary sources of this frightful misfortune. There are faults, the avowal of which is painful, the inclinations of a corrupt nature, of fatal examples, or dangerous occasions, have drawn these unhappy souls into disorders of which the remembrance alone covers them with confusion; of what expressions are they to make use to qualify them? How are they to detail them? The enemy of their salvation, who at first had made them regard such faults as slight, then exaggerates their enormity, sets everything at work to render the acknowledgment of them painful. Then these poor souls fall into a terrible agitation, and if a charitable and experienced director does not himself sound their wounds, and does not place upon their lips the painful avowals which they have to make, timidity or shame may shut their mouths, or not permit them to discover but a trifling por-

tion of the evil; sometimes it leads them to resist even the solicitude and charity of the director, and to add a lie to faults already sufficiently grave. Nevertheless, absolution is pronounced over their head, but God does not ratify it, for He has not promised to the sinner His pardon except *when he returns in all sincerity of heart*, that is to say, with frankness and without any subterfuge. Thence what a series of sacrileges!

Secondly, general confessions are necessary for those who have failed in contrition and a firm purpose of amendment, who have only promised with the mouth to withdraw from occasions of sin, to break habits of it, to make restitution, to fulfil the duties of their state; for those who have only sought to return back to the grace of God and to lead a new life, to save appearances in receiving the sacraments, &c. How many are there not in this condition! They have made, it is true, a sincere avowal of their faults, but this avowal has never been followed by a solid conversion; after a thousand avowals, they have a thousand times fallen back again, with an equal facility, into their culpable habits, and their life is a series of falls and relapses without any amendment.

Thirdly, general confessions are necessary for those who have only externally accepted the penance which was imposed upon them, without having the will to accomplish it; their past confessions have been null, through a fault of will of satisfying God.

If a doubt exists of a *reasonable* kind as to the validity of past confessions, we are obliged to repair them by a general confession, or by a review

in proportion to this doubt, because it is not permitted to leave the affair of salvation thus in doubt.

Relapses into the same habits, into the same voluntary occasions, if they follow soon after Communion, above all, if they have not followed the advice of the confessor, should cause a fear to be felt for the existence of contrition and a firm purpose of amendment, and a doubt as to the validity of the confessions.

But if these relapses only happened a considerable time after confession, if there is a real and notable amendment, a true fidelity in following the advice of the confessor, and resisting temptations, they would not mark a want of contrition and firm purpose of amendment in the preceding confession; the real amendment which has followed would rather mark a sincerity of purpose.

General confessions are useful for those who, not being disturbed with scruples, would think over their life in the bitterness of their soul, although they do not doubt the goodness of their previous confessions; these confessions are an excellent means to begin living holily in the new state they have embraced.

The great advantages which spring from these general confessions, or reviews, are very capable of inspiring a desire of having recourse to them. These advantages are:—1. To repair the defects and omissions of preceding confessions; 2. At the sight of all one's faults brought together at the same confession, one is more profoundly humbled, one groans more bitterly, one is absolved more surely; 3. We know ourselves better, we learn

better the principle and source of our sins, we are better acquainted with our predominant passion, we take stronger measures, more powerful means to fight against it; 4. We make ourselves better known to our confessor, who thus is in a position to direct us more effectually, and give us advice more proportioned to our wants; 5. We see, we feel better how great has been the goodness of God in our regard; thence arise more lively sentiments of love, gratitude, devotion, and fervour in His service.

In these general confessions, which may be recommended with profit, but which are not necessary, an examen and detail of faults are not required so exact as in those which are necessary.

General confessions are hurtful to those who are *really scrupulous*, we ought not to give way to the pressing manner in which they ask to make them, these new confessions will not calm their troubles; they will no sooner have made them than they will wish to make them over again, and they will not be more content with the second than they were with the first. "A general confession," says St. Francis Xavier, with reason, "causes much more scruples than it destroys."

2. What counsel ought the mistress to give her spiritual children when they consult her upon the troubles which they suffer relative to their past confessions?

She ought to be very reserved to those whom she has reason to believe are scrupulous; nevertheless, as this class of persons may themselves have well-founded disquiets, she ought to engage

them to open themselves with all frankness to their director, and if he judges that they ought not to make either a general confession, or review, she should forbid them to think of it, and recommend them strongly to put away from their minds disquiets which the spirit of darkness only causes to arise in order to disturb them, and turn them aside from the practice of the virtues of the holy state which they desire to embrace.

In regard to those whom she has no cause to believe scrupulous, she ought, with stronger reason, to engage them to confide their uneasiness to a director, to make to him, if he judges it to be fit, a general confession, or very frank and sincere review, making them understand how happy one is when the conscience has been well purified, and it has nothing to reproach itself with, &c.

In the fear that timidity or shame do not prevent them from following this advice, the mistress will act wisely in informing the director, in order that, if he judge prudent, he may, by some questions help these persons to open themselves, and to confide their trouble to him, and to make an avowal to him which is often indispensable.

3. In fine, what conduct ought a mistress to adopt when the director exacts, permits, or forbids general confessions ?

Whatever may be the knowledge which the mistress may think she has of the interior state of her spiritual children, she ought never to lose sight of what we have said above, that, generally speaking, the confessor alone knows the whole depth of consciences, and that he alone has the grace of pronouncing upon their state, because he alone has

been established as the minister of the Sacraments.

When, therefore, he judges general confessions to be necessary, the mistress ought not to manifest any surprise or doubt, and, with stronger reason, any opinion contrary to that decision, above all, if those to whom it has been given seem to be afflicted at it, otherwise she will be exposed to lead them to shun a step on which often their salvation depends, or not to perform it with the proper dispositions. She ought to applaud the decision which he has given, to set everything in operation to determine those to whom it has been given to submit to it with all their heart, and to engage them, and to aid them, as much as is in her power, to make it with all possible zeal and pains.

The mistress ought to act in the same manner when the director judges general confessions useful.

In fine, when he judges them hurtful or dangerous, she ought always to approve of his decisions, and forbid decidedly those who have received them, to think any more of reverting to the past, otherwise she will foment their troubles and anxieties, and expose herself to cast into their souls a disorder often difficult to be remedied.

ARTICLE VII.

How the Mistress ought to direct Novices of a melancholy character.

Melancholy, says an author, is a defect which absolutely may be associated with much virtue; but when it is not accompanied with much virtue, it is the source of many other defects much opposed to the good of society, and which ordinarily are no more corrected than the melancholy itself which produces them. Thus, St. Chantal and St. Teresa recommend, both one and the other, to their spiritual children not to admit subjects that are affected with melancholy.

But care must be taken not to assume as melancholy some passing fits of sadness caused by sensibility, against which, otherwise, one labours either by interior trials to which one has never yet been accustomed, or by scruples which may be corrected, &c. Because melancholy persons must be distrusted, there are those who would find at the least sign melancholy in every novice; care must be equally taken not to be deceived through an opposite excess.

Behold the picture which Father Pinamonti draws of a really melancholy person. To be shut up within himself, and never to go forth to be sociable; to be taciturn, and when he speaks, to do so commonly in a few words: to receive impressions with difficulty, but after having had them, to retain them with obstinacy, above all, in regard to evil, bad suspicions, unfavourable judg-

ments, antipathies and aversions; to be deep in design, hidden in his proceedings, secret in all that concerns him, that causes him pain or pleasure; to be of a close mind and a shut-up heart, unfitted to enter into friendship with anyone whatever; disposed to refuse a service, or to render it with a bad grace; ungrateful, covetous of everything, never parting with anything, slow to praise and prompt to blame; in his intercourse with men, to affect a grave air, which no passion disconcerts, and soon after, to allow himself to be excited with anger and passion; to be gross and rude in his manner, incapable of contributing to the pleasure of society, or to find in it anything that was agreeable to him, offensive and annoying by his gloomy remarks, severe in exacting all sorts of attentions without rendering any to others; indifferent, cold, contemptuous, and almost always ready to contradict when he dares, subject, in fine, by a return of capricious humour, to hold long discourses, and be the first to laugh at all he has said.

"In general," continues the author whom we have first cited, "by following a novice close, examining her air, her most ordinary manner; how she receives a reproof; how she answers when she is questioned; when advice is given her about her defects; the questions she herself puts, the things or persons about whom she complains, the virtues to which she applies above all, if it is to the mortification of her natural defects; how long a time she keeps up her displeasure; the account she gives of what she reads; the connexions which she would wish to form; the things which she

criticizes and blames; if she yields with difficulty, and if she is conceited in her ideas, and manifests that serious look which approaches to sadness; if she is careless in approaching her duties, &c.; the mistress will be able, at the end of some time, to settle her judgment.

But although possessing little virtue, and destitute of any real courage, which is seldom met with in cases of melancholy, the melancholic, nevertheless, in order to succeed in attaining profession, will assume enough on themselves, in order to conceal the defect which gnaws them in secret. They will show, in the exterior, the opposite of what they are; then, after their profession, they will give themselves up without measure to the impulses and dark fits of their melancholy, and will be precisely those who will become intriguers, critics, difficult on every point, contented with nobody nor with themselves. St. Teresa complains much of them; for, says she, "though we may avoid with great care the reception of such people, this humour is so subtle and hard to discover, that we do not perceive it except when we can no longer send away those who are subject to it."

"It is necessary," says Father Pinamonti, "to treat the melancholic with gentleness, in order to gain their affection; with much openness, in order to engage them to open themselves; with discretion, in order to allow them permission to be solitaries whenever they may wish. It is necessary to know how to occupy them in a holy way, but without overburdening them; interrupting even their purely interior exercises by external duties,

by works of charity towards their neighbour, or by some others suitable to their position."

"Melancholy persons," adds another author, "melancholy persons who possess the virtues of humility and obedience, suffer always from their own humour; but, also, by encouraging them, exhorting them to patience, submission and fidelity to their duties, they will be able to heap up great merits without being a burden to others."

The melancholic, who have neither great humility nor great fear of God, listen but little to what is said to them to support themselves against their own humour, and to gain profit by it towards their own salvation; thus they are not cured, and are a burden to a Community.

ARTICLE VIII.

How the Mistress ought to direct Novices of a phlegmatic character.

"Phlegmatic persons," says Father Pinamonti, "are made of ice, insipid and dull in their intercourse, indolent to a degree that nothing can arouse, with an idleness that nothing can awaken, a torpor from which only an extreme necessity or excessive fear can draw them for a short time; such are spirits irresolute in undertaking, feeble in pursuit, tardy of execution, easily yielding to the suggestions of others, almost incapable of initiating any project, and capable of being cast down by the smallest obstacle. As this character is less calculated than every other for virtue, it cannot be too carefully managed. The mistress

ought to be well on her guard not to treat with contempt this class of persons, or to reprimand them with sharpness; such a proceeding would shut up the entry of their hearts against her; instead of which, by marks of esteem and kindness, she would prepare them for instruction so as to be listened to. This instruction ought to be made by degrees, in order not to overwhelm them with advice that may alarm their weakness. We gradually show the light to a man who has been kept for a long time in a cavern, for fear the strong light of day should injure the sight enfeebled by darkness; we must equally take care not to give these persons too much to do, and to strive rather to curtail a thousand trifles with which they busy themselves, a thousand affectations of self-love to which they are more subject than to any other; the way to proceed, is by accustoming themselves without too much exertion to the mortification of the senses, and to lead by degrees to self-denial of themselves. They must lead them, by gentle and persuasive means, to advance in virtue, in order that they may not continue in a sort of slumber; while they do not commit any evil, at least they no longer do much good. But should they happen to fall into any more serious faults, it would be requisite to rebuke them with firmness, for, being of a complexion that is weak and less susceptible of violent passions, they would be able to flatter themselves that they have great virtue, when, perhaps, they only possess the shadow of it. Thus, on these occasions, a remonstrance which is strong and capable of striking them, will tend to recal them

from the advantageous idea which they have of themselves, it will trouble a tranquillity of which they will be shown the danger, and will oblige them to have recourse more frequently to God, to find true repose in Him.

In fine, these two general maxims should be observed in their regard: 1. Never to permit them to be mixed up with any affair of importance; it would risk too much in the hand of parties who are irresolute and so idle as they are; 2. Not to propose them considerations that may fill them with dread, unless it be in some matter on which they require to be roused. Generally, they must propose to them motives that are touching, tender and affectionate; these motives are more within their reach than all others.

ARTICLE IX.

How the Mistress ought to direct Novices who are of a sanguine temperament.

"Persons in whom there is a great amount of blood," says Pinamonti, "are more sensible to the attraction of vice, but more accessible also to the impressions of virtue. What quickly characterises them, is a love of pleasure and a dread of pain. They are fond of joking, they are lively, vain, good-natured, flighty, capable of making up to everybody, in order to cause themselves to be beloved; they form connexions and break them off; they are lovers of all the amusements in the world, of parties of pleasure, of walking, of light conver-

sation, of company, of theatres, sensual friendships, of good cheer; thus the names alone of mortification, of fasting, penance and retreat, give them alarm.

Such kinds of persons require, in a mistress, an engaging manner and great proof of kindness. If the mistress should exhibit herself towards them, above all at first sight, with an austere look and the air of a reserved person, she would repel them, and be abandoned by them as if for ever.

By the same motive, she will not represent virtue to them as very painful and difficult to acquire; she will not prepossess them regarding obstacles still remote in their regard, and which they may meet in the spiritual road whenever they determine to walk upon it; she will tenderly inform them rather that everything is easy with grace from above, which never fails us, when we ask for it as we ought; that the state the most desirable and happy in the world is that in which we serve God with all our heart.

The mistress will apply herself, in regard to sanguine persons, to purify their heart, which is the source of all evil. She will endeavour, as we have said at Article VIII. of the preceding chapter, to enkindle in their heart an ardent love for God; and for this, she will paint for them, in lively colours, His eternal love for us, His benefits without number in the order of nature and of grace, His infinite perfections, the everlasting rewards which He is preparing for us, &c.; she will discourse with them very often on this Divine love, in order to inflame their heart, so sensible and so

ardent that it cannot rest a single moment without food.

She will strive to root out of their heart affections that are too human, which still predominate, by introducing into it, through frequent ejaculatory prayers, the perfect and eternal God in place of imperfect and contemptible creatures: *You alone, O my God!* She will watch attentively that no particular friendships are formed between them and their companions, and all particular attentions, marks of confidence, or company keeping, all signs of sensual intimacy, every kind of familiarity with any of them.

Let her take care also, on her side, that they do not become too much attached to her own person, which will infallibly occur, if she permit them useless attentions towards herself, conversations that are too full of affection, and, above all, to assume near her attitudes that are soft and effeminate, to give her marks of their friendship, &c. She ought, without repelling them with sharpness, to show herself severe on this point from the commencement; otherwise, she will find a great deal of difficulty in healing the wounds which she may have made in their hearts; such individuals, who are all fiery, are subject to pass from one extreme to another, that is to say, from foolish love to hatred and aversion; when after having granted them too much we become severe towards them, then they are agitated, irritated, break into lamentations, get discouraged and exposed to the temptation of giving up everything. These kinds of hearts are very difficult to keep within just limits; but they are capable of great

generosity when they are well directed; such hearts are like those of Magdalen and Augustine; they are capable of the most heroic virtues and the most deplorable errors.

Certain bodily mortifications are often very dangerous to sanguine young persons; when the mistress perceives it, she ought to forbid them absolutely, at least for a time.

ARTICLE X.

How the Mistress ought to direct her Novices, who are of a bilious constitution.

"Persons of this character," says Pinamonti, "require great attention and extreme care. They are choleric, rough, active, full of desires, obstinate in holding their first ideas, but capable, after that, of repenting of them and condemning themselves. Ambition and pride are commonly, in them, the two springs that give motion to all the rest. Thence the longing to excel others, at whatever cost, at the expense of charity, of justice, even of evident truth; thence the earnest care to render everything conducive to their elevation, contempt and forgetfulness of the considerations due to each according to his rank, liberty of censuring every one that gives them umbrage.

Two situations in which they may be found will make them better understand themselves. If some cross, some unforeseen obstacle, should all at once stop them, it will need nothing more to disconcert them; they fall into dejection, they dry up, they languish away, for want of food to keep up their

haughtiness and vivacity. But if any new occasion presents itself to distinguish themselves, they fall back as soon as possible into their lofty spirit, resume their haughty air and domineering tone, talk as mistresses, boast of their ability, parade their success, interrupt, through contempt or impatience, her who is speaking, and rally all those whom they see are beneath them; they invent, exaggerate, are audacious in finding fault with everybody, and cannot endure to be found fault with by any one.

In order to correct these defects almost without number, the mistress ought incessantly to fix her attention upon both the exterior and interior of her in whom she has had occasion to remark them.

For the exterior, she will act so that the novice may prevail over herself to become more modest in her discourse and manners; not to seek in her conversation for subjects to dispute; to state simply her reasons on the points which are contested, and then to leave to others, as she ought, the liberty of refusing or giving their approbation, always supposing that there should be no question of the truth, which ought to be maintained on all occasions. It will be also very useful for that purpose to converse with such as are of a peaceful spirit, and to avoid those who are of a similar humour as her own, as much as order and charity permit.

For the interior, the reformation of which is more essential, let her meditate often on the patience of our Saviour under injuries; upon His meekness in His conversations among men; upon

the modesty with which He received them, upon the desire which He has to see us imitate His meekness and humility. If the novice does not lose sight of this divine model, it will produce in the end stronger impressions upon her heart than those which arise from the effect of constitutional temperament. For the rest, when in spite of the violence which she may have offered to herself, she will have yielded to some fit of ill humour, let her not become irritated with herself, it would augment the evil instead of diminishing it. Let her humble herself on these occasions, let her confess, in the presence of the Lord, the excess of her weakness, let her ask His pardon, let her implore His assistance, of which she has such urgent need, in order to subdue the sallies of a violent nature, and let her renew her holy resolutions.

The mistress ought to take care to pursue in her own regard the same conduct that she enjoins her; that is to say, that in directing her she should use great moderation; her example will secure more for her than the most profound reasonings. If, then, a novice makes an avowal to her of some fault, let her check at once all sentiments of impatience towards the guilty party, and let her remind her of her duty with a sweetness and peace which condemn her own violence. A high and dry rebuke would sour her; gentle words will gain her.

The mistress ought, besides, to exhort her to virtue; but not to press her beyond measure upon her exercises of piety; such souls have often more need of the bridle than the spur; neither ought she to permit her to multiply them, as her fiery

character would prompt her to do. That multitude of practices, good as they are in themselves, might be injurious to her, and promote an activity which must be abated. The mistress will use similar discretion in her austerities, because excess, in whatever way it may be, is more to be forbidden her than all others. But, in fixing her upon this point, she ought to teach her that obedience is much better than all the voluntary mortifications of the flesh, and that we acquire a double merit in not mortifying ourselves at the time we most desire to do so.

For the rest, the mistress will set every thing to work to produce in her a strong conviction that her violent natural disposition is not an obstacle to her perfection, that she will attain it if she perseveres for some time in her generous efforts, and the more she gains over her temperament, the stronger her virtue will become, and the more capable of great things; whereas, those persons whom an icy temperament leaves almost always in the same state, have, usually, only a very moderate degree of virtue, and are only fit to accomplish very small things for God.

The mistress ought to read again what we have said at Article V. of the preceding chapter, upon the manner of training her spiritual children to humility, she might, above all, apply it with good results to persons of this character.

Although the mistress ought to employ gentleness towards persons of whom we are speaking, she ought, nevertheless, to act in a manner so as not even to allow them to suspect that the plans she adopts towards them are the effects of their

weakness, of the desire she has to be agreeable to them and to gain their good opinion; she ought, on the contrary, to make them fully understand that she does not treat them in this manner except through motives in which nature has no part, and that a love for their eternal salvation is the sole animating cause of her conduct. Without this precaution, it would not be impossible for some amongst them to abuse a mildness which they might regard as a condescension that was quite natural, and that they might undertake to govern in their fashion her who ought herself to govern them.

ARTICLE XI.

How the Mistress ought to direct her Spiritual Children who are of an intriguing character.

An intriguing character, says an author, is usually and altogether flattering, insinuating, bold, enterprising, violent, and besetting, and it is all this according as its purposes may require. As it is not guided by the true principles of charity and religion, it is capable of giving itself up to the greatest delinquencies, and without absolutely designing it, it will not fear to compromise a mistress, a whole noviciate, a whole community, and sow trouble and disunion in it; one single individual of this description would suffice to destroy all the good in a monastery and to bring every evil upon it.

It is not that she has always a great amount of genius, but it is that she and her kin possess the

fatal talent of disguising themselves, by deceiving by inexact reports, which sometimes their imagination makes them believe to be true, and to impose on them through the appearance of a good intention and real uprightness. And so it is that not unfrequently they quickly master minds of a weak and irregular nature, they often succeed in winning over others to whom a simplicity of heart left but little safety against their seduction. The mistress herself should only listen to them with caution, if she is desirous of not being deceived.

It is indispensable to put down persons subject to this unhappy defect, but it is not an easy thing, because, usually, their intrigues are secret, and because they engage, as much as they are able, others in their party, without anything appearing except by the evil effects which result from it. Often though di-satisfied with them, you cannot take them in hand seriously, because you cannot distinctly allege any particular fault that merits a severe reprehension, or which could not be excused through some proper motive. In a word, it is felt that there is reason to be greatly dissatisfied, without its being possible to conclude anything, which could justify this dissatisfaction in the eyes of the noviciate, which perhaps will take up their defence. In fact, these kinds of characters are not open to any one, and they have the talent of contriving their plans with an address that specially belongs to them, saying one thing to one, another thing to another, according as each may be affected, taking due advantage of their dissatisfactions, of their petty interests, of their different passions, and even of their piety. What conduct

ought the mistress to pursue in regard to these classes of persons?

1. She will appear to perceive nothing, but she will follow very closely these intriguing spirits, and without their being able to suspect her object, she will seek with prudence for convenient reasons to go to such and such a place at such a time; she will examine well the persons with whom her spiritual children associate, she will weigh with attention every wo d they utter, and the discourses which they hold; in a word, she will follow them at every step, as much as it is possible to do it with prudence, and without giving them an opportunity to discover it. She will keep, in order to forget nothing, an exact account of all she will have remarked in them that merits animadversion, of what they say or do on such a day in presence of such a person, &c.; and, pending all these investigations, she will maintain a great patience and a profound silence upon her projects.

2. When the mistress shall have collected sufficient heads of accusation, of which each one, perhaps, separately may appear of little consequence, but which, on the whole, will suffice to expose clearly the spirit of one of these intriguing children, and all that there may be cause to fear from her; she then has her in a private interview, and, without letting her know all that may be against her, she will tell her in general that she is not satisfied with her, that she is in a position to prove, in case of need, the just subject of her discontent, but that in the meanwhile she forbids all particular intimacies, under any pretence whatever,

and that for good reasons, and all private conversations, though there be no special intimacy.

That person will probably appear very much surprised, she will sob, she will protest her innocence, she will lay it all on false reports, and perhaps she will assume a tone of haughtiness in order to justify herself. The mistress will answer in two words, that the defence which she is making relates to matters that are very serious, that she first admonishes her as a good mother, but that if she does not obey and correct herself, she will be obliged to deal with her severely and to explain, to her great confusion, the motives of her conduct, motives which the guilty party may easily ascertain if she would enter seriously into herself.

3. If the guilty one does not correct herself after one or two faults that are fully certain and prominent against the prohibition given to her, the mistress will make her come to her again, and will speak to her still more seriously than the first time; and if this second advice is still unaccompanied by any amendment, at the next chapter, and after having taken counsel and prayed, the mistress will unmask this child entirely, since it will be so dangerous for her not to be known; profiting by all the knowledge which she shall have privately collected, she will unveil all the underhand and unperceived dealing till then of that intriguing spirit, and will impose upon her a penance proportioned to her faults, without however depriving her of the hope of obtaining her pardon and the esteem of her sisters, if she knows how to humble herself, to obey, and amend.

4. If it happened that some of the noviciate would not open their eyes, nor be undeceived as to the charge against the guilty one, and that she herself, supported by others too blindly attached to her, should refuse to obey and submit themselves to the penance imposed, the mistress will then have recourse to the authority of her superioress in order that she may decide if there is occasion to keep any longer a subject who can only be injurious to the noviciate, without admitting any hope for her conversion.

ARTICLE XII.

How the Mistress ought to direct Novices of a curious character.

Curiosity is a very common vice, and of which few people reproach themselves, says a master of the spiritual life. We shall find, however, some who recognising it in themselves, labour to correct it. When they pay attention to the useless thoughts that fill up their minds, to the disquiets and division of heart which it occasions, to the agitations and troubles which it produces, to the void which it leaves in the interior, to the little unction and attraction which they feel to be united to God, they are alarmed at it, and wage war against it. But how many are there who remain stagnant in this vice without reflecting on the ravages which it causes in the soul, and without putting themselves to the trouble of extirpating it from the heart.

Many carry with them the vice of curiosity,

without perceiving it in themselves, although it may be the true fruitful principle of a multitude of faults of which they accuse themselves, but of which they do not correct themselves, because they do not think of drying up the source which produces them. Sometimes this vice is perceived in others, and little attention is paid to it, because it is only looked upon as a little weakness which people must mutually pardon in each other, upon which it is good to shut one's eyes, and from which we have not much to fear.

In truth, when we are not ourselves much inclined to vice, there is not so much to apprehend that it may be communicated to us, but, as it is usually accompanied by many other vices which may easily be communicated to persons, enemies even to the vice of curiosity, it may, when it is carried to a certain point, become much more dangerous than may be imagined, and cause a great injury to the whole of the noviciate.

The mistress, in order effectually to assist those of her children who are affected by this vice to destroy it in themselves, ought to devote herself to obtain a good knowledge of its origin and maintenance, its effects and remedies.

The origin and maintenance. *Idleness* is the first principle of curiosity. We do not, ordinarily, find any one given to this vice who is fond always of useful occupation; but an idle and unoccupied person carries her idleness all about the house, and seeks there for some one with whom she may lose a time which, all precious as it is, is a burden to her; she comes up to the first person she meets, and inquires about everything that is pass-

ing, is doing, and is being said. Such is her life.

An itching to speak is the second source of curiosity. They speak, and are always wanting to speak; but of what do they speak if they know nothing? They must then draw from some to lavish on others, and often they add something of their own, for fear this river of words may come to dry up; they fatigue themselves and fatigue others by these long conversations, which incapacitate them from fulfilling the essential duties with which they would be less fatigued. Can such conduct be exempt from sin?

The third source is *vanity*. A desire exists to show off knowledge, ability, experience, and even piety. Individuals wish to pass off as persons who are very important and very acute, who are calculated for everything, who know everything, who discover every design and almost every thought in others. As they do not take time to acquire it, in order to have a right knowledge, they speak of everything, and very badly, and they only exhibit to such as are truly enlightened a compound of everything ridiculous in the most foolish vanity, as well as every restless inquiry of the most contemptible curiosity.

The fourth source of this vice is *malice*. These persons would be ignorant of none of the defects, none of the faults of their companions; and for this they are envious to spy them in secret, to examine them in public, at one time for the purpose of finding an authority for their own bad conduct, at others to enjoy the cruel pleasure of revealing the evils they have seen, and to censure

them before others, and that forsooth under the specious pretext of zeal. Their eyes are always open and on the alert, their ears on the *qui vive ;* there is no reserve, no modesty.

The means which curiosity employs to attain its ends are *artifices.* There are none which it does not employ to succeed in what it desires to know ; they are incessantly on the watch, they listen at the doors, at the windows, on the roads, in parlours, in rooms, in out of the way places, in darkness, to know all that is said in secret. Out of all the papers that fall into the hands of a curious person on the point on which the question is made, not one is safe; letters, writings about family affairs, perhaps matters of conscience, nothing stops her.

Flattery is another means employed by curiosity. Has a curious person a suspicion that there is any matter on the carpet, or any little division, she goes and finds those who are interested about it ; she testifies her interest in them, and, in order to inform herself well about everything, she begins by giving them to understand that she is informed about the matter; she insinuates herself into minds by a feigned compassion, by flattering compliments, by evil counsels, and surprises the simplicity of some, the uprightness of others, and renders them, sooner or later, her victims. Sometimes she will play the same game with two opposite parties: what a monster of duplicity ! Curiosity does not always seek to satisfy itself by similar excesses, but it may be led to it, and the mistress ought to apprehend it much, and to keep herself on her guard.

2. *The effects of curiosity.* They are afflicting and deplorable. It is this, in fact, which has introduced the first sin into the world, and it is this which every day introduces into it a multitude of others, even into the Religious state. It destroys in it silence, recollection, peace, regularity, obedience, charity, edification, &c. We do not speak of the danger of being eternally lost where persons are addicted to this vice, when they carry the vice of curiosity to the extent we have described, and whither it insensibly leads; they are seldom known to be converted. We ought, then, to tremble for the present state and the future lot of such persons; a Community is much to be pitied which possesses any of this class; it ought to be greatly afraid of admitting any fresh cases.

3. With regard to the means which the mistress ought to adopt to correct the vice of curiosity, she ought, in the first place, to declare herself loudly the enemy of curiosity, to stigmatize it, to expose it before all her spiritual children, to make them sensible of all that is blameable in it, all that is base and dangerous in it, &c.; secondly, to recommend to them never to accede to the desires of persons that are curious, by reminding them of the dangers of such fatal condescension; thirdly, she ought to follow closely such as are curious, to set herself of her own accord in the track of their footsteps, of their connexions, and to adopt in everything the plan which we have marked out for her relative to intriguers, with whom they have but too proximate a relation.

The mistress, in all these difficult cases, ought always to begin by employing towards her children

methods of gentleness and persuasion, and not to have recourse to rigorous means until after she has exhausted all others, for these last very rarely effect a conversion of souls.

ARTICLE XIII.

How a Mistress should act towards Novices who are inclined to carry reports.

The disposition which certain persons have to make disadvantageous reports of their companions, takes its source often in jealousy, envy, antipathy, hatred, revenge, or some other equally odious vice; sometimes it only comes from levity, indiscretion and imprudence.

When it is passion or imprudence which leads us to make reports, they are ordinarily false or inexact. Often mere appearances, simple suspicions, are taken for realities, and the merest minutiæ are magnified by the imagination, or by a malicious will. But reports, whatever they may be, true or false, cannot but do a very great deal of mischief. True reports are, in proportion, more dangerous, as it is more difficult to heal the evil which they have caused, whereas false reports, although more criminal, have at least this advantage, that they can be remedied by making their falsehood known.

The sad effects of reports, true or false, are mistrusts, divisions, quarrels, enmities, desires of vengeance, &c., which destroy charity in a noviciate, and encompass its ruin.

1. The mistress ought to engage her children

to give a bad reception to tale-bearers, and even, notwithstanding the authority that age may give them, to mortify them, or, at least, to show them that they are only listened to with pain, as all ought to do from a principle of charity. Such conduct will infallibly render tale-bearing characters a little more reserved.

2. To paint, before the eyes of all, the character of a tale-bearer, and the grievous consequences of their mischievous reports, in colours so black, that there may be more fear than longing in persons suffering themselves to be betrayed into a vice which is their source.

3. To endeavour to discover whence proceed these kinds of reports, which, though secret at first, reach her sooner or later; and when she knows the authors, to punish them, to confound them so as to take away from them a longing to ever fall back into them, and from others any desire to imitate them.

4. It is necessary that the mistress should be as much an enemy of tales that are brought to herself, as of those that are brought to particular individuals, and that it should be well known that every tale-bearer is odious. This, however, requires some explanation.

There are reports which it may be appropriate to make to a mistress, and, in consequence, she ought not to give an unfavourable reception to all who report anything to her; if she was informed of nothing, she could remedy nothing. Now, often she cannot know the evil that has happened, except by reports made to her about it; she ought then necessarily to hear everything that can give

her information, but she ought to hear them with all the precautions possible, and of which we now proceed to indicate the principal.

First, when persons come to inform her of any fault, or any other matter that deserves attention, she should answer simply that she will reflect upon it. From whatever quarter these reports may come, she ought to have the wisdom to suspend her judgment, because piety and zeal itself may be deceived. She ought, as much as is possible, to examine things by herself; if the thing is necessary, and prudence permit it, she will hear the parties interested separately; in order better to know the truth, she will give all the attention possible to discover whence the reports proceed that have been made, and to what they appear to tend.

If they come from a person who is regular, mortified, charitable, and already old in the noviciate, she will pay them all the deference they deserve; but for the reasons which we have explained, she will not ground a definitive judgment before having maturely weighed everything. If the reports be found to be false, she will offer no reproach against the person who made them, since her age gave her the right to make them, her regularity and her virtues attest the purity of her views, and since, by an indiscreet reproach, she would shut up all access to communications the most wise and necessary. That person was deceived, it is the result of human weakness; the mistress may say to her, that after having well weighed everything, she has found that the matter was a mistake, or at least was not so grave as it appeared; she

might say this to her, as if to console her, for that person being as we have supposed, would be effectually consoled that God and religion had not been offended.

If the reports made to her prove true, but that the purport of them is frivolous, or if they have been made to her by young persons whose purity of view is very doubtful, even if after having made her a report that was not very suitable in itself, they return at the end of some period of time to the question, by a species of impatience through her appearing to have forgotten it, or making little account of it, the mistress should fear that all this comes more from passion than from zeal, and to reprove those who have made such reports to her, by showing them the wrong they have done; but as their fault has been secret she ought to rebuke them in secret, unless she has greater reasons for acting otherwise.

In fine, whatever may be the reports which have been made to her, the mistress ought not to hear any without preserving for those of whom mention was made an ear always favourably disposed to admit their justifications. She ought even, as much as prudence permits her, to excuse them before those who accuse them, in order that they may have less facility in condemning their sisters, and that they may be accustomed to have compassion for them, even in the very faults which cannot admit of any excuse.

By these different methods, the mistress will succeed in banishing, at least in part, all reports that are imprudent, precipitate or passionate, and

with them the divisions which are their fatal results.

We add also that the mistress ought not to place in the rank of reports which we have condemned the just complaints which a person may make to her, as to the truly mortifying conduct which another may have adopted in her regard. To whom could the novices confide their troubles save to her? And with what other could they look for some consolation in their afflictions? The mistress ought then to hear with charity these kinds of complaints, to examine seriously if they are well founded, and to render full justice to the party offended. But she ought, in the meantime, to humble and mortify a character so blameable, who, thinking too highly of herself, or who, wishing in some way to get off with impunity in her faults, could not endure that any report should be made to her disadvantage, and to whom the mistress would not know how to give advice, even though full of kindness and charity, without her casting it on the report which should have been made to her.

ARTICLE XIV.

How a Mistress ought to conduct herself towards Novices who are often strongly tempted, when they consult her to know if they can go to Holy Communion.

When the novices have recourse to their mistress to consult her in their doubts, she ought always to be ready to receive them, above all, when

there is room to believe that they are disturbed by the weight of some pain; she ought to receive them without making it appear that she feels any irksomeness, disgust, or embarrassment, but with an air of sweet serenity, capable of warming their heart, and engaging them to lay open to her in all confidence their pains and difficulties.

When the mistress is consulted upon any point upon which there is a fear any of her novices may wound, or has wounded her conscience, she ought not to fear, says a master of spiritual life, any difficulty in her own, in order to answer, according to the lights she may possess, the trouble proposed for her to solve. If the case is doubtful, she ought to decide ordinarily in favour of her who consults her, when it is a person who is timorous and fervent; but if she is a person tepid and negligent, in case of doubt, she ought to refer her to her confessor.

When she is consulted in order that a person may go to Communion after some fault she may have committed, she ought to examine if she who consults her is a person whom she knows as ordinarily telling only a part of what has happened, or stating them quite differently from what was the truth.

In the first case, she ought to tell her, that if her conscience does not reproach her with anything but what she has mentioned, she may approach the holy table. She will be, however, careful to say a word as to the importance of an exact explanation, whenever she is consulted. Then the novice would be alone responsible, inasmuch as she may have dissimulated, since upon the

judgment of her own conscience she will have to recoil in relation to the point she may not have declared, and since it is supposed that the mistress is not sure that she is making use of dissimulation.

In the second case, that is to say, if the person who consults explains things quite otherwise than they are, whether by ignorance, blindness, or passion, the mistress ought to dissemble with prudence, lest they may think her under a prejudice; but, before answering, she will endeavour, by way of questioning and supposition, to lead by gentle means the person who consults her to declare the truth without disguise. If she cannot lead her to this avowal, she ought to use some pretext to prevail upon her to put off her Communion until she has consulted her confessor.

In general, a mistress ought to use some caution in giving decisions to persons whose state is unknown to her, when their reserve in opening themselves and confiding in her does not admit of her inquiring into the circumstances of things, and when in questioning them she may upset them, and cause them, without meaning it, to dissemble the truth. All that can done as the most prudent course is, to tell them that she asks nothing of them, being unwilling to unsettle them; that if such and such circumstances have arisen in the matters on which they consult her, they may go to Communion, that if such and such other matters have taken place, they may not go.

When the mistress is consulted in an uncer-

tainty and doubt, if they have consented or not to certain temptations, if the person resists them habitually, and for a long time, having a timid conscience on that point in particular, and living otherwise in a regular manner, the mistress ought to encourage her and decide in her favour. If the person has committed a little time previously some voluntary fault on the same point, although she may have confessed it, the thing is more doubtful, and the mistress ought, for more security, to hinder her from Communion until such time as she has approached the tribunal of penance.

If the mistress is consulted on the subject of certain miseries, which, without being properly temptations, are very distressing and troublesome, miseries which may happen even to the most innocent souls, or be occasioned by old habits which efforts are made to destroy, but to fall into which inclinations are still felt, although acts are no longer elicited, the following is the course of conduct that should be followed.

If the person has not voluntarily given an immediate and culpable occasion to these miseries, if, after having experienced them, she has not occupied herself with them in a manner to wound her conscience; then at whatever moment she has undergone this cause of pain, she must be obliged to go to Communion. If this rule be not followed, she would never go to Communion, or very rarely, because, in order to hinder her, the devil would provide always the same kind of miseries, and because the fear even she might have them in the thought they might be an obstacle to Communion, would often serve to produce them.

The mistress ought, nevertheless, to examine if the person has not committed some fault, which, without having a direct reference to this subject, may indirectly give rise to it; such would be faults contrary to obedience, to humility, and to charity, &c.; for these faults may dispose towards such kinds of miseries, by way of chastisement and weakness: in this case the person must be told, and persuaded, as a measure of propriety and respect, not to go to Communion. Another decision should be adopted if these faults were very slight, and arose rather from surprise and weakness than from a deliberate will, and in the mean time a strong determination existed for their correction: in this case they must not be made to abstain from Communion.

There are some who suffer from another embarrassment in going to Holy Communion. They will be full of their distractions in the recital of their office, and they cannot be sure if these distractions have or have not been voluntary, or borne with great negligence.

To satisfy these parties, the mistress ought to lean rather to the side of severity than that of mildness in regard to such as are not very particular upon this article, and very negligent in observing their Rules, easy in the breach of the duties of charity, &c.; she ought only to give them general answers, which in no way compromise her conscience, and if she is urged to decide more clearly in a doubt, she ought to send them to their confessor.

In regard to those whom she knows to be seriously devoted to the practice of the religious

virtues, in a doubt she should ordinarily decide in their favour. As to those of the last description, who should be extraordinarily scrupulous in regard to their office, and who should be agitated with every sort of disturbing thoughts in the recital of it, in every doubt, not only ought the mistress to tranquilize them, but also expressly to forbid them to repeat the smallest portion. (See, in addition what we have said, Part, I., Chapter ii., Article 2, of this work.)

ARTICLE XV.

How the Mistress ought to conduct herself towards Novices who are sick.

The sick, after Father Beaufils, ought to be the dearest objects of the charity of the mistress of novices, and this charity can never be excessive when occasion offers for procuring them any relief. She ought often to visit her sick, to study how to console them, to encourage them, and to keep up their spirits; she ought to enter into the smallest details of their wants, the circumstances of their infirmity, and of the remedies to be assigned them, in a word, after the example of the apostle, she ought to be *infirm with the infirm.*

The mistress ought not to confine herself to exercise this kind of charity in dangerous and violent diseases, the smallest inconveniencies ought to excite her attention. It may so happen that in some it will be only a delicacy, that some again may exaggerate indispositions that are only light, that these allege only what is in their imagination,

perhaps even some will make a pretence to escape the rigour of the discipline of the Rule. The mistress, who ought to know her children, will form an estimate of their constitutions, their characters, and will see if they are suitable for the religious life, will examine all in silence and before God; but, in general, she ought to believe when they make their complaints, and St. Augustine expressly orders it in his Rule. A slight infirmity may become grave if it is neglected; that which is only imaginary has always something real about it, because it disquiets and alarms; as to her who should presume to feign, the mistress ought rather to risk being deceived, than to leave without relief evils that might be real. She ought to dissemble her distrusts, if she thinks she has a foundation for having them; it is better to be too credulous, than to get into danger of being uncharitable.

But in order to give the mistress rules that are more precise upon the conduct she ought to follow, we distinguish three classes of maladies: those which are accidental, rare, and of short continuance; those which arise from imprudence and excess of sensitiveness; and, in fine, those which are mischievous and dangerous.

1. Persons who suffer some accidental infirmities, which are rare, and of short continuance, have, says a master of spiritual life, a need of prompt relief, repose, and attention, in order to re-establish them the sooner in a sound state of health. These are ordinarily such as are the most exact, and who are the props of regularity. Their zeal must be moderated, and they must be excluded from the common exercises until they are

sufficiently restored to be able to resume them without being incommoded. It ought to be the same as to the abstinences and fasts of the Rule, and also of those of the Church, if there is any necessity, and this necessity, it is not for the sick, but for the physician, the mistress, and the superioress to judge.

In general, the mistress ought not to have any trouble in granting these kinds of dispensations to those who require them, believing that they have need, unless she is *well assured* that they deceive themselves. It would be to expose them to many pains and temptations which they must be spared, and expose herself to sin against that charity which she owes them, to refuse them these dispensations.

The mistress ought to be firm and careful in causing the orders of the physician to be exactly obeyed, without stopping to consider her own feelings, or the repugnances of the sick.

2. The maladies that arise from imprudence or excess of sensitiveness.

There are many persons who would have good, or better health, if they did not place any obstacle in the way through imprudence or too much sensitiveness. By imprudence, to wit, by watchings or fatigues with which they burden themselves without need and to please their own fancy, through a zeal that is indiscreet and is above their strength; by an excess of sensuality or inattention, which hinders them from denying themselves the food which does them harm, but which pleases them, or not partaking of it but with great restriction; in fine, through too much repose, or

through want of exercise, which comes from indolence, heaviness, and sluggishness.

By too much sensitiveness, which causes persons to be distressed about frivolous things, or through far too many real pains both interior and exterior, those of parents or friends in whom we take too lively an interest, or even through a rebuke, a humiliation, a contradiction, a raillery, a censure which they have wiped off, &c. We may add, the troubles and disquiets which arise from discouragement, scruples, temptations, or other trials, and which, while they enfeeble the vigour of the soul, insensibly undermine that of the body.

If all these useless imprudences and vexations were banished from the noviciate, the mistresses, who may succeed in destroying them, would be deemed the first physicians, since thereby they would preserve a health which physicians could at most restore. It is then the object on which the mistress ought to employ all her care, and here is the surest means to which she ought to have recourse for success in effecting it.

First, let no one retire to rest in pain, as much as possible, because the silence of the night is calculated to promote disquiet and uneasiness too much, as well as the dissatisfactions and evil reflections which spring from the rebellion of the passions, which causes loss of sleep, appetite, &c., and, through a necessary consequence, health.

Secondly, let her labour to destroy or to soften all the pains of conscience which come from sins, scruples, temptations, or trials; let her strive to drive away all bad humour or natural melancholy,

let her devote herself to mortification of the pas sions, of the judgment, and of self-will, and to correct the esteem or excessive love of herself, whence sprout up all her passions and all her mental troubles. In fine, let her allow no dissension, obliging always those who are divided to a prompt and sincere satisfaction and reconciliation.

Thirdly, let her procure, as much as possible, moderate bodily exercise; let her keep up peace, union, and joy in all hearts; let her allow those who want it—but in moderation, not to occasion another evil—some time for relaxation and recreation, to enable them to unbend themselves, always, however, in conformity with their religious state and spirit, leaving them at liberty to use it, without introducing at it ill-timed rebukes.

3. Grave maladies. The mistress ought to bestow on those who should be attacked by any, the most sensible marks of tenderness and compassion. She ought to visit them continually, to show them kindness, even to wait on them, to watch and see that they want nothing for soul or body; in fine, to procure for them, with the greatest care, all the consolations which they have a right to expect from a good mother, without distinction of age, condition, fortune, or character, &c.

APPENDIX

How the Mistress ought to form a just opinion of the Vocation of her Children, and what account she ought to render to the Chapter when they are proposed for the Habit or Profession.

In order to form a just opinion of her children, the mistress ought to weigh maturely, before God, as we have said elsewhere,—1. What motives have determined them to withdraw from the world and enter the cloister; 2. What motives have determined them to remain in the cloister, since they have entered it; 3. How they have passed the time of their probation.

1. What motives have determined them to quit the world, and to enter the cloister. If the motives which have prompted them to this step are a contempt of the world, a desire for heaven, a desire to do penance, to follow and imitate Jesus Christ, their vocation has a supernatural and divine character—the mistress may regard it as good in its principle.

If the motives which have led them to this step have been a reverse of fortune, or some obstacle to the fulfilment of their projects, or some earthly desire, &c., their vocation does not appear to have in its principle a divine character; however, as God

in His mercy makes use sometimes of these sorts of means to detach from the world certain souls, and lead them to His ends, the mistress ought to consider the vocation of such as doubtful.

2. The mistress ought to examine the motives which have determined her children to remain in the cloister since they have entered it. Those who have entered it through pure and supernatural motives, settle themselves there, ordinarily remain in it for the same motives, form themselves in it to solid piety, and their vocation acquires in the course of time a greater degree of certainty.

As to those who have entered through human motives, if God has made use of these motives to break asunder the links that attached them to the world, and draw them to Himself when they entered, grace takes hold, in a way more or less rapid, of their mind and heart, detaches them from the earth and from creatures, lifts them sweetly to heaven and to God, excites in their heart salutary remorse, causes to spring up in it the spirit of penitence, a pure and holy desire of embracing, for God alone, a sublime life which they know not, and which they had never thought of embracing except by low and inferior motives; then the vocation of such persons assumes a character that is very encouraging, and even very consoling; fidelity to grace and perseverance will give it a last degree of evidence.

If, on the contrary, there is nothing but what is human in the conduct of these persons; if it has not been suggested them except by the enemy of salvation who seeks to lead them astray and to destroy them, grace does not speak to their heart,

they may persevere in their blindness without repenting for the past and without resolutions for the future; the world and the present life continue to be their idols, they cling to the cloister such as they were when they entered it, then their vocation becomes more than doubtful.

3. The mistress ought to examine how her novices passed in the cloisters the time of their probation, and it is this point which is the most important.

The time of the postulancy and noviciate is given to those who aspire to the religious life *to destroy the old man*, according to the expression of the Apostle, *and in order to give birth to the new man*. They ought, during this precious time, to labour incessantly to mortify their passions and to correct the defects of their character. They ought, above all, to subdue their pride, in permitting others to admonish them of their faults, to reprove them, and to humble them. They ought to embrace with zeal the different practices of penance in use in their monastery, to accustom themselves to renounce their own wisdom, their own lights, their own will, their liberty, convenience, and ease; to obey in a blind manner, whether the things commanded be easy or difficult, conformable to or contrary to their tastes; to bear the long offices of night and day, the fasts and abstinences of the order, the poverty of the food, the coarseness of the clothing; in a word, all that the institute, into which they wish to enter, may present in its practices and observances repugnant to nature.

The postulants and novices who have courage-

ously fulfilled this task during the time of their probation, and who are fully determined to persevere in this conduct, may be considered as having a good and settled vocation, whether their first step has had supernatural motives as its principle, or whether it has had motives that were less noble, but afterwards retracted and replaced by those that were more pure.

Those who, during the time of their probation, have only fulfilled these conditions with irresolution, indolence, or only at intervals by fits and starts, should be considered as having a doubtful vocation, above all, if they have not entered at first through pure and supernatural motives. It would be very dangerous to admit such persons to profession, without submitting them to longer probations, and before having perceived in them a decided change; they could not be permitted, without some danger, to take the habit before being more fully tried; we rarely obtain from them, after this step, what we could not obtain before; on the contrary, regarding themselves as more secure of their reception, they become less vigilant, less generous, and fall very often into a deplorable relaxation, which compels their dismissal.

The persons whom it is specially necessary to prove still more, and not to admit until after a very marked change, are those who have a character that is melancholy, singular, talebearing, intriguing, intermeddling, and turbulent. It is useful also to distrust in an equal degree characters that are deceitful, frivolous, capricious, hypocrites, proud and haughty, singular and original, &c.; unless there is in all these characters a radical

and well-confirmed change they become the cross of monasteries; for the change which is not effected in them before profession, is hardly ever accomplished afterwards.

In fine, those who, during prolonged probations, have by no means fulfilled the conditions which we have mentioned above, who have not laboured effectually to subdue their passions, and to reform their character, who have not trained themselves either to the virtues or the practices of the holy state which they wish to embrace, ought to be considered as not having any vocation, even did they possess the purest morals, the most rare qualities, the most distinguished talents, and the richest dowry; in effect, all these advantages prove that the acquisition of such subjects would be very precious for a community if God called them to the religious life, but they by no means prove that they are called to it, whilst their habitual infidelity in the practice of the virtues and duties of this holy state inspires more than a doubt upon this point.

The mistress, after having thus weighed before God the vocation of her children, after having maturely weighed, if it is good, doubtful or false, ought to make concerning it in the chapter a detailed, a *very exact* report, without dissembling either the good or the evil she sees in them. She ought to make this report in an exact manner, without disguising or dissembling anything.

1. Because the Religious who have votes, not knowing, usually, the subjects for whom they are about to give their vote, except from the report which is made to them, cannot, if this report be

inexact or incomplete, decide with knowledge of the cause.

2. Because, if in consequence of inexactness in the report that is made to them, those who have a vote admit a subject who has no vocation, or should exclude one who has a good and solid vocation, the mistress would be responsible for it. Terrible responsibility! in fact, what will she answer to God, if, by her fault, a person who has a good vocation, whom God had Himself willed to shelter from the perils of the world by conducting her to solitude, should come to be driven out and lost? What will she again answer Him, if a soul which is not called, be admitted, and becomes towards her community not only a burden, but also an object of scandal, or even a source of peril and ruin? The mistress cannot, then, bestow too much care, exactness, and candour in the report which she makes to the chapter, if she wishes to preserve a safe conscience.

NOTICE FOR THE USE OF MISTRESSES,

UPON THE OBLIGATION IMPOSED UPON THE RELIGIOUS OF RECITING THE DIVINE OFFICE, AND UPON THE MANNER IN WHICH THEY OUGHT TO FULFIL THAT OBLIGATION.

ARTICLE I.

Obligations imposed upon Religious respecting this point. Circumstances in which these obligations cease or are modified.

The choir Religious are obliged, under pain of mortal sin, to the recitation of the divine office indicated in their Constitutions, approved by competent authority, unless they be legitimately dispensed; they ought to recite it in choir, if they cannot, they ought to recite it in private. This obligation is founded, not upon the Religious vows nor the Rules of each order, but a usage, a custom which has the force of law, and which is considered as such by the Church and by Catholic doctors.

This obligation concerns not the postulants nor the novices, who before their profession are not bound to the duties of the religious life under pain of sin. It is the same with the lay sisters even who are professed, who are admitted into convents, not for the offices of the choir, but for exterior and manual labours; they are not obliged to anything on this point, unless their Rule pre-

scribes for them a certain number of *Our Fathers* and *Hail Marys* to say, or the Rosary, as we see in almost all the religious orders; again, they are not bound to these prayers except as to other points of the Rule.

The obligation of reciting the office in choir concerns all the religious who are not lay sisters; but it is above all rigorous upon those who are obliged to watch over the fulfilment and direction of the office.

Although the novices are not rigorously obliged to the office of the choir, when they recite it alone, according to the Rules prescribed, they satisfy the obligation of the community, provided they are in the number which is strictly prescribed, that is to say, at least three.

The Religious who, through legitimate reasons, do not assist in the choir, commit no sin, and fulfil their obligations by reciting the office in private; but if they should abstain from the choir without a lawful motive, they commit a fault more or less grave according to circumstances; their fault becomes especially grave when there is scandal, or when their presence is necessary.

If some Religious does not know sufficiently how to read in order to follow the choir, she would satisfy the obligation imposed on her by reciting the office of the lay sisters, until, in the judgment of the bishop, confessor, or superioress, she is capable of reciting the common office in a fitting manner; Clement VII. has granted this permission to the Clarists who should happen to be in the case above-mentioned. Innocent IV. has extended it to those who were under the direction of

the Friars Minors; since that time, this permission has been extended to the Religious of all the orders, who have a right to use it every time when, for a reasonable motive, they are unable to recite the canonical hours; for example, when they are agitated by scruples, when their mind is fatigued by some extraordinary labour, or too considerable occupation. Thus doctors have decided since the Bull of Innocent IV.

The Religious can change nothing when reciting the Confiteor, and they must not say, *Tibi Mater, Vobis Sorores;* but as it is set down in the Breviary, *et tibi Pater et vobis fratres,* as the Congregation of Rites has decided.

But what are the motives for which the Religious may be dispensed from the Breviary? These motives may be reduced to three: *impossibility,* a *grave impossibility,* or moral impossibility, and *a legitimate dispensation.*

Impossibility. No one is bound to what is impossible, it is a principle universally admitted; a Religious, then, would be dispensed from the recital of the office who has no Breviary, because she has lost her own and cannot procure another for herself. If she has wilfully deprived herself of it by destroying it, or otherwise, she has sinned grievously, and the omission would be imputable to her. Nevertheless, if she repented sincerely of her fault, she does not commit any fresh sins by omitting her office until she can procure herself another Breviary.

A Religious is also dispensed from the recital of her office who has lost her sight, or who, in

consequence of a paralysis, becomes reduced to the impossibility of articulating.

A great difficulty, or moral impossibility, for all theologians admit this axiom: *Positive laws do not oblige, when their accomplishment meets with any great obstacle.* Whence it must be concluded that a Religious is exempt from the obligation of reciting the office:—1. Who suffers a grave infirmity, for instance, a fever, a violent headache, or pain in the bowels, &c.; 2. She who has a legitimate fear that the recital of the office may bring on some particular infirmity; 3. She who is convalescent is dispensed, at least for several days, until she has recovered sufficient strength. In the doubt as to the gravity of her infirmity, application is to be made to the judgment of the physician, or of some other prudent person; 4. She who, during the time of persecution, has reason to fear that the recital of the office may cause her to be discovered and delivered up to the persecutors; 5. She who, all the day is occupied with works of charity, or others which cannot be postponed *without great damage* to herself or her neighbour.

In fine, a *legitimate dispensation.* The obligation of the office is not imposed upon the Religious by the natural or by the divine law, but by the laws of the Church, the Sovereign Pontiff can then validly dispense from them; bishops and vicars-general have in France, according to usage, the same power; they can, however, only dispense for lawful reasons, and only during the lapse of a short period.

She who cannot recite the divine office at the

appointed hour, ought to recite it during that which precedes or that which follows it, because the precept obliges during the whole of the continuance of the day. She then who foresees that in the evening she will be prevented reciting Vespers and Complin, ought to say them in the morning; she who cannot recite Matins and Lauds before the evening, is obliged to say them at that time, if she can, because her obligation only ceases at midnight.

She who cannot recite the whole office is obliged to recite the part for which she has no legitimate impediment; so Innocent XI. has decided.

She who cannot recite the canonical hours, is not bound to cause them to be said by another, because this obligation is personal; she is not bound, moreover, in strictness, to recite other equivalent prayers, because this compensation is not prescribed by any ecclesiastical law. Nevertheless, pious religious do it ordinarily, and some authors, such as Navarre, Collet, &c., greatly recommend this practice. (Bouvier.) In this case she ought, it appears to me, as we have indicated above, to recite the office of the lay sisters.

II.

In what order, and at what time, the Divine Office ought to be recited. Integrity and Continuity necessary.

Order of the Divine Office. The canonica hours ought to be recited in the order in which they are arranged in the Breviary, that is to say,

matins must be said before lauds, lauds before prime, &c. Nevertheless, the inversion of this order is not in itself a grave sin, unless it be accompanied with contempt, because it does not bear the mark of a grave disorder; such is the common opinion of theologians. When a reasonable motive exists for inverting the order which is marked, no sin is committed in doing so.

Thus, in the first place, she who has not said her hours when the time comes for reciting the vespers in choir, may follow the common office, on the understanding she resumes afterwards the hours which had been previously omitted.

Secondly, the Religious who has not said her matins and lauds in the evening, and who, not being able at the moment to procure a Breviary, should have a diurnal in her possession, may recite the hours before the matins and lauds.

Thirdly, she who has not recited the matins and lauds, may recite her hours with a sister or mother who might invite her to do so in order to assist her, with the understanding she afterwards resumes the previous portion set down in the Breviary.

Fourthly, in the same case, she may recite with another the matins and lauds of the following day, before having terminated the office of the preceding day, but always afterwards taking care to resume the part omitted.

Time at which the office ought to be recited. From midnight until the same hour of the following night, the office of the day may be fulfilled; but through the result of a usage which existed already in the time of St. Thomas, we may, when

the sun has reached the half of the course he has to run until he sets, recite the matins and lauds of the following day. It is, however, more perfect to recite each of the parts of the office at the hours of the day and night that are marked for it: for example, matins in the middle of the night, lauds at the aurora, prime at sunrise, tierce at nine o'clock, sext at midday, none at three o'clock, vespers at sunset, and complin at twilight, or when the sun has gone down, as Benedict XIV. explains it.

She, who, after midday, recites the matins for the following day before the hour appointed, does not satisfy the obligation, because the time fixed for it is not yet arrived; in the same way, she who defers her hours and vespers till midnight, cannot either satisfy her obligation, because the time fixed for fulfilling this duty has expired; in this last case, she is guilty of a fault more or less grave, according as her negligence has been more or less great, but she is not obliged to recite the part omitted.

During Lent, it is the custom to recite vespers before dinner; this custom has as its object the memory of the ancient discipline of the Church, according to which the fast was not broken until after sunset and the recital of vespers; nevertheless, those who, on days of fasting, do not assist in choir, may even, without any reason, defer the recital of vespers till after dinner.

No part of the office, besides matins and lauds, can be validly said the evening before, for any motive whatsoever. She who foresees that on the following day she will not be able to recite the

hours, cannot recite them over-night; but she can recite them validly during the whole of the day for which they are appointed, that is to say, from midnight till the middle of the ensuing night.

To change the hour appointed for the recitation of each office without a reasonable motive, is a venial fault more or less grave, according as we depart more or less from the appointed time, and when the neglect shown in doing so is more or less manifest; matins and lauds ought then to be recited in the morning, prime and tierce before midday: however, these last hours may be put off, without reason, till after midday; vespers ought to be recited during the space of time which intervenes between midday and sunset; complin may be put off till later.

When there is a reasonable motive, we may anticipate or put off the recital of the hours, but it is more perfect to anticipate than to defer them, because, "to pray before the appointed hour;" says Hugo of St. Victor, "is prudence; to pray afterwards is negligence;" so the Fathers of the Society of Jesus and the Friars Minors have obtained an indult, by which they are authorized to recite in the morning all the hours to complin inclusively, whether it be on account of some journey or some occupation.

An honest and reasonable motive, such as, to hear an instruction, a well-founded fear of some forthcoming occupation or embarrassment, a desire to profit by a moment that is more favourable for recollection, &c., are sufficient for anticipating or postponing lawfully any part of the office. "This

is," say Liguori and Bouvier, "the common opinion of theologians."

Integrity of the Office. Every Religious is obliged to recite the whole office appointed for each day, and cannot recite another in its place. However, if, by inadvertence, she has recited another, she is not obliged to recite that which she has omitted, because it is not presumable that the Church wishes to impose a similar burden; this is the common opinion of theologians. She completes solely the office she has recited, adding what there is proper in that which she has omitted; or, if she has recited an office much shorter than that which is marked, she would add that in which the former office is more lengthened; then she ought to recite the office of the current day, when even, through inadvertence, she had recited it another day.

When there is a doubt if she has recited one or more of the hours, and a positive reason exists for believing that they have been really said, she is not bound to say them over again; if there is no positive reason to believe that they have been said, but rather that they have not, she is bound to recite them over again, because the obligation is certain, whilst the fulfilment is doubtful. When we are sure we have said the appointed hour, and doubt only whether it has been wholly said, we are not obliged to recommence, for, if we were so obliged through such doubts, our soul would be troubled with constant disquiets.

The *Our Father, Hail Mary, and Creed,* appointed for the beginning of the office, form an integral part of it; but it is not the same for the

Aperi, and *Sacrosanctæ*, which are only repeated through devotion, as well as the anthem to the Blessed Virgin, *Salve*, &c.

The integrity of the office is satisfied by reciting it with the two choirs (when even the other portion is composed of seculars); and, in this case, it suffices to hear the other part with attention, as well as the lessons, little chapters, verses, prayers, &c., which are recited by only one person or by several: it is thus that general usage interprets the law, but it is necessary to psalmody aloud with the side of the choir on which they are.

She who, during the recitation or the singing of an office, is obliged, by her employment or by some order of a superior, to do something which contributes to the solemnity of the office, for example, to prepare the books, to announce the anthems, to light the candles, to direct the cantors, &c., is not obliged to repeat what the others have sung or repeated while she was engaged, when even she has not heard it, because the portion of the choir to which she belongs has supplied for her; this is the common opinion of theologians, and, in particular, that of Liguori.

She who really pronounces the words, but who is not heard, whether on account of some external noise, or on account of deafness, satisfies for her office, by consent of all the theologians.

But she who does not read her Breviary except with her eyes, or who does not pronounce the words except between her teeth and without articulating them, does not satisfy its integrity, because thus there is no real recitation of the office.

It is the same with her, who while psalmodying

with her sisters, employs so much precipitancy that she does not give them time to finish their verse before she begins the next; if, nevertheless, this fault only applied to a small number of verses, she would satisfy the integrity, and commit only a slight fault.

She who changes or abbreviates the syllables in such a manner that the sense of the words becomes changed, or morally unintelligible, would not satisfy her obligation; if the sense of the words was not changed, and if they did not become unintelligible, the fault would be slight.

It is safer, in order to provide for the integrity of the office, to recite each one by herself the verses or other parts which are executed on the organ, or at least to cause them to be recited by one or several voices, which may be heard by all the choir.

Continuity of the Office. Every hour may be recited separately, because it forms a complete whole, and then the *Pater*, or the *Pater* and *Ave* prescribed by the rubrics, should be said before and after, as it is appointed. Lauds may equally be separated from matins.

A notable interruption during the recital of an hour, for example, between two psalms, involves a fault, if it happens without a reasonable motive, because the unity prescribed by the Church is broken; but this fault cannot exceed a venial sin, because the precept is observed in substance.

If an hour be interrupted through some legitimate cause, for example, in order to receive the visit of some one whom we cannot ask to wait without inconvenience, to give an answer that is urgent,

to execute the order of a superior, to give order or advice to her inferiors, &c., there is no sin. Liguori assures us, that in this case it is most probable that we are not obliged to recommence the part already recited, when even the interruption has lasted a considerable time. The reason which he gives for it, is that every psalm and verse contain a sense that is complete, and are sufficiently united to those that follow, whether by the intention we have to continue them, or by the forthcoming continuation of the part omitted; "otherwise," says he, "if the interruption occurred without a motive, it would only be the cause of a small fault; consequently, when there is a legitimate cause, it cannot be the occasion of any fault."

The complete nocturns, that is to say, those which are accompanied by lessons, may be divided into three different hours, at least, when there is some small reason for thus dividing them. Anciently, say several others, it was the usage to separate them in this manner. In such a case, we finish the nocturn, and begin the next without adding the *Pater Noster*. (Bouvier.)

III

Of the attention and intention necessary when reciting the Divine Office, and of the attitude we ought to preserve during that time.

Of the Intention. The intention is an act of the will which wishes or desires something. "It is certain," says Monseigneur Bouvier, "that we

must have some intention when reciting the Breviary, otherwise this recital is not a human action. Actual intention is not necessary, man is not capable of it; virtual intention suffices. The fulfilment of the precept of the Church, which prescribes the recital of the divine office, should be the object of this intention. For the rest, we ought not to disquiet ourselves upon this point. She who, being obliged to the recital of the divine office, wishes to recite it, and recites it in effect, according to the custom she has in doing it, expresses thereby, even implicitly and sufficiently, the intention which she has of satisfying it.

It is not necessary to renew this intention at the beginning of every hour, when even we recite them separately, because by taking up the Breviary again to recite the hours which follow, we express that intention in a sufficient manner.

Of the Attention. The attention is an act by which the understanding is employed in considering something. There are two species of it; the interior and the exterior attention.

The interior attention is an act by which the soul applies herself to what she is reciting.

The exterior attention consists in not doing anything externally incompatible with interior attention, such as to read other things, to paint, to speak to somebody, &c.

The interior attention, relatively to the divine office, may be either superficial, literal or spiritual.

The superficial attention consists in studying only the words, in the intent to pronounce them correctly, distinctly and respectfully.

Literal attention consists in studying to comprehend the sense of the words that are pronounced.

Spiritual attention consists, in fine, in thinking of God, to whom we address our prayers, for the graces which we ask of Him, or to the saints whom we honour.

Attention purely exterior, accompanied by distractions fully voluntary, does not suffice; she who, during a notable part of the office, is voluntarily distracted, does not satisfy the precept, and sins grievously, unless she recommences, at a convenient time, the portion of the office which she has badly recited

We must remark that distractions may be voluntary: 1. In themselves, when we employ our thoughts upon some other subject with *advertence* and *determination*. 2. They may be voluntary in their cause; we give ear to discourse we hear, we regard with curiosity objects that surround us, or give way to sleep, through having, by negligence, put off the fulfilment of our duty to too late an hour in the night, &c.

Nevertheless, if there was a sufficient reason to perform the act which was the cause of the distractions which are experienced, they are not culpable, provided they are not dwelt upon, and do not constitute an impediment to the office being otherwise validly and lawfully said. At least, in this case, the fault is only slight.

Likewise, she who only gives an imperfect consent to distractions, or combats them with some negligence, is only guilty of a slight fault, and satisfies as to the substance.

Actual and spiritual attention is excellent and desirable, but it is not necessary: virtual and literal suffices. Superficial attention, by which we study the words, in order to pronounce them correctly, distinctly and respectfully, joined to a pious intention of praying to and honouring God, is even sufficient, because a prayer so recited is truly worthy of God, and satisfies the precept.

Spiritual attention is more perfect. After this, literal is the best; superficial attention is the most imperfect, but it suffices.

Every Religious bound to the recitation of the divine office, ought to propose to herself to honour God, and renew this intention from time to time. If, after having begun to recite it with attention, she is surprised in some distraction, she ought calmly to recal her attention, and continue without interruption.

Persons subject to scruples ought to avoid, with the greatest care, beginning any part of the office again, on account of the distractions which they might have suffered; otherwise they soon become a prey to the most violent agitations. "If they fall into such a trouble, it would be well," says Liguori, "to stop them for some time saying the Breviary."

Of the attitude to be adopted in reciting the Office.—When we recite the office in choir, we are obliged, under pain of venial sin, to follow all the attitudes prescribed by the rubrics, as to rise, to sit down, to incline, to bend our knees, &c. When we recite the office in private, we are not strictly obliged to follow this practice, but it is more per-

fect to do so. Such is the common opinion of doctors.

Many among them advise, in this last case, that the office should be said, after the example of the saints, standing or kneeling, except at the lessons and responses; but they all acknowledge unanimously that there is no fault in reciting it sitting or walking in a becoming place, and remote from noise and confusion.

Many think that there is a venial sin in reciting it without reason in bed, or in an attitude of sloth and negligence.

What we say here concerning attitude is applicable to the sign of the cross and other matters which are in use at offices in choir. It is good to make oneself adopt them in private, but there is no positive fault in omitting them. She who, for a reasonable cause, says in choir her office to herself, ought, for uniformity, to refrain from any sign relative to the office she may be saying, to restrict herself to those which are made in choir, and act in the same way with regard to the divers attitudes of the body, following all the movements of the choir.

When the matins and lauds of Sunday are recited the evening before, we ought to say standing the anthem to the Blessed Virgin when the sun has not gone down; and when the sun has gone down, it ought to be said on our knees.

To gain the indulgence attached to the *Sacrosanctæ*, we ought to recite it on our knees. (Bouvier.)

NOTICE FOR THE USE OF THE MISTRESSES OF NOVICES ON INDULGENCES.

An indulgence is the remission of the temporal punishment which remains to be undergone by the sinner, after his sin has been pardoned and the eternal punishment has been remitted. The Church grants this remission out of the tribunal of penance, through applying merits of which it is the depository and dispenser. In order properly to understand the nature and the effects of an indulgence, it is necessary to be reminded—1. That in sin there are two things quite distinct, the *guilt* and the penalty. The *guilt*, or offence, is the injury offered to God by the sin. The penalty is the right which God reserves to Himself, when pardoning sin, to inflict a temporal punishment.

2. We must remember that the *guilt*, and the eternal punishment which it merits, can only be remitted by the sacrament of penance, or perfect contrition joined to an efficacious desire of receiving this sacrament, but by no means through an indulgence, however extensive it may be supposed to be. An indulgence does not even remit a venial sin.

3. In fine, it must be remembered that the temporal punishment due to our sins must be paid in the order of God's rigorous justice, either voluntarily during the present life, by works of satisfaction, or necessarily and by compulsion in purgatory. Now, the effect of an indulgence is to discharge us of this temporal penalty, in whole or in

part, according as the indulgence is plenary or partial.

It may be seen, by what we have just said, that there are two kinds of indulgences, one plenary and the other partial.

A plenary indulgence is that which remits entirely the temporal punishment due to our sins. If he who has gained it should just die before he has become guilty of any new fault, he would, without delay, be admitted to the reward of the just.

A partial indulgence is that which remits only a part of the temporal punishment. The time specified in the partial indulgences has no reference to that which a person would pass in purgatory, if he should happen to die before having satisfied the divine justice, but to that which was indicated by the canonical penances in use during the first ages of the Church. We ought not then to understand that an indulgence of forty days delivers from forty days of purgatory, but that it delivers us from a punishment equal to that from which we should be delivered by a canonical penance which heretofore would be imposed for forty days. By an indulgence of seven years and seven quarantines, which the Sovereign Pontiff grants in certain circumstances, we must equally understand that it remits before God the punishment of purgatory which would have been remitted to those who, in conformity with the canons, would have been bound to seven years of penance, by fasting once or twice a week, and who, moreover, would have fasted seven times during forty days.

Partial indulgences that are the longest are

commonly seven, ten, and fifteen years. There are few examples of partial indulgences granted for a longer time. In this last case, their authenticity should be examined with the greatest care.

Certain indulgences are purely *local*, that is to say, are attached to a specified locality, such as a church, an altar, a chapel, &c. Others are real, that is to say, they are attached to certain objects, such as crosses, pious pictures, medals, &c. Others, in fine, are *personal*, that is to say, granted to certain particular persons; indulgences granted to communities, confraternities, and associations, are of the same nature as the last.

Persons without character and without mission carry about and distribute a quantity of indulgences void of all authenticity; we ought, according to the recommendation of Pope Benedict XIV., to be greatly on our guard against such kinds of publications. Thus, the indulgences called of "*The Holy sweat, of St. Genevieve of Brabant, of the Crosses of Coravaca*," those which have no other support than the *Revelations of St. Bridget, of St. Elizabeth, of St. Matilda*, as well as those which are contained in the book entitled, "*The Key of Paradise and the Way to Heaven*," &c., deserve no confidence, and ought to be rejected.

Three things are indispensable to gain indulgences:—1. The intention, at least a general one; it is then important to direct our intention to this object at the beginning of every day; it is even good to renew it from time to time during the day.

2. The state of grace, since an indulgence im-

plies always that mortal sin has been pardoned and the eternal punishment remitted.

3. The exact accomplishment of all that is prescribed in the bull. In order to gain fully a plenary indulgence, four things are also necessary; —1. Not to preserve any affection, either to a mortal or a venial sin, for he who preserves an affection for mortal sin, not being in a state of grace, cannot gain any indulgence; he who preserves an affection for a venial sin, can only receive the remission of the punishment due to the venial sins for which he is contrite. 2. To go to confession; confession ought to take place the evening before, or the day itself on which the indulgence may be gained. Nevertheless, after a decree of Clement XIII., those who are in the habit of going to confession every week, it matters not what day, are not obliged to go again. 3. We ought to go to Holy Communion, unless the bull does not exact it, which scarcely ever happens except for the Way of the Cross. The Communion ought to be made on the day named for the indulgence, or at least the preceding day; it is not necessary to go to Communion in the place mentioned for gaining the indulgence. 4. We must pray for the intentions of the Sovereign Pontiff. If the question is about a local indulgence, that is, must be gained in a fixed place, it is there that the prayers must be recited; we are at liberty to use whatever prayers we please, we satisfy, for example, by reciting the litanies of the Holy Name of Jesus, or those of the Blessed Virgin, or the Miserere, five Paters and Aves, the Rosary, &c.

We may gain several partial indulgences in one

day; as to plenary indulgences, we cannot gain more than one, except, perhaps, for several who are dead, when the Bull states that we may apply them to the dead. There is an exception for the indulgence of the Way of the Cross, which we may gain several times in one day.

Indulgences attached to a particular feast which is transferred, are only gained on the day upon which the feast falls, unless we have obtained a special authorization from the Head of the Church to gain it on the day to which the Feast is transferred.

METHOD OF MENTAL PRAYER

FOR THE USE OF THE MISTRESSES AND THE NOVICES.

Q. What is prayer?

A. It is an elevation to and application of our mind and heart on God, to perform our duty to Him, to lay before Him our wants, and become better thereby for His glory.

Q. How many parts are there in prayer?

A. Three: to wit; the preparation, the body of prayer, and the conclusion.

Q. How many preparations are there?

A. There are three, the most remote, the less remote, and the immediate.

Q. In what consists the most remote?

A. In three things;—1. In a great purity of heart; 2. In a perfect mortification of the passions; 3. In a great fidelity in guarding all our

senses, whether interior or exterior, against vanity or curiosity.

Q. In what consists the less remote?

A. In three things also;—1. In preparing overnight the subject of prayer, and turning over in the mind, while dressing, the duties which we must perform to God, the considerations we must make, and the resolutions we must form; 2. In keeping ourselves in a strict silence and great recollection from the prayer in the evening until the following morning after prayer; 3. In starting promptly, as soon as the hour at which we ought to make it has arrived, and going with joy and humility to perform our duties to God and receive His orders.

Q. In what does the immediate preparation consist?

A. In three things;—1. In placing ourselves in the presence of God; 2. In acknowledging ourselves unworthy to appear before Him, and to be suffered to stand in His presence; 3. In acknowledging ourselves incapable of performing our duties to Him, and to pray to Him as we ought.

Q. How are you to place yourself in the presence of God?

A. By two acts, one of faith, that He is present in the place where I am, and in my heart; the other of adoration of the infinite Majesty that is present to me.

Q. In acknowledging your own unworthiness to appear before God, what do you do?

A. I do two things;—1. I enter into sentiments of penance at the prospect of my sins, and for this I make acts of humiliation, self-confusion, and contrition; 2. I unite myself and abandon myself

to our Lord Jesus Christ, in order to appear before His Father in His own person, and pray to Him in His own name.

Q. Acknowledging your incapacity to perform of yourself any duties to God, what do you do?

A. I perform two acts;—1. I renounce my own understanding, which is not capable, as to what concerns the truths of salvation, of guiding myself and my inclinations; 2. I invoke the Holy Spirit, that I may make my prayer under His lights, His movements and direction.

Q. Of what is composed this body of prayer?

A. Of three parts, of which the first is adoration, the second communion with God, the third co-operation.

Q. Why do you call the first part adoration?

A. Because on this point we render chiefly our duties to God, and adoration, from which it takes its name, is one of the principal.

Q. In what way do you begin the exercise of this part?

A. I begin the exercise of this first part by the religious consideration of some attribute and perfection of God, or of some mystery or virtue of our Lord Jesus Christ, or even of some saint.

Q. What do you then do upon this consideration?

A. I endeavour, by several acts, to perform my duties to God, or our Lord Jesus Christ, or the saints, according to the subject of the meditation.

Q. What are these acts?

A. They are ordinarily six, adoration, wonder, praise, thanksgiving, love, joy, or compassion.

Q. Is it necessary to express always and in this order all these acts?

A. It is not necessary, and even it is good to abandon ourselves to the affections which God gives, and often to repeat that to which we find an attraction from the Holy Ghost.

Q. What do you afterwards with these acts?

A. I pass to the second point of the prayer, that is, communion with God.

Q. Why do you call this second point communion?

A. Because it causes us to enter into a participation of the perfection or virtue which we have adored in God or in Jesus Christ at the first point; now, this participation is communion with the gifts of God, in His perfections and the virtues of our Lord, or of His saints, is called by the holy fathers, communion, as well as the participation in His body and blood.

Q. How is this communion or participation made?

A. It is made particularly when we ask of God the virtue or perfection on which we are meditating; as, by the fervent supplication which we are making on this point, we are drawing Him into our heart.

Q. Does it suffice, on this point, to ask this virtue of God?

A. No; we must, in order to excite ourselves to ask it with more fervour;—1. Convince ourselves well of its importance and necessity; 2. To make a reflection upon ourselves, in order clearly to

know that we are wanting in it; 3. to ask it of God with earnestness.

Q. Are there then three things to do on this point?

A. Yes; conviction, reflection, and petition.

Q. Why conviction?

A. Because, being convinced of the importance and necessity of virtue, we ask for it then with the greater fervour. We often neglect to ask, or we ask only very coldly, for things we do not consider to be important, or of which we persuade ourselves we have no great need.

Q. Why reflection on ourself?

A. Because, being perfectly convinced of the importance of a virtue, we do not ask for it with all the fervour we ought, unless we clearly know we are wanting in it; now, this is what we effect by reflection upon ourselves.

Q. What must we do to convince ourselves?

A. We must consider the reasons and the motives which oblige us to possess and to practice virtue in the perfection on which we meditate.

Q. Whence do you draw these reasons and motives?

A. From the subject of prayer which we have read or heard the preceding evening.

Q. In what way do you make this consideration?

A. I make it in several ways, or by a simple view of faith, and by representing only in a general way these motives to my understanding; or by a kind of examen, running over quietly one after the other, or by reasoning.

Q. How do you make the reflection in yourself?

A. In revolving my thoughts, words, and actions, to see the part which I have in, or the distance which I am from, this perfection, from the grace of the mystery, or of the virtue, on the importance of which I have just convinced myself.

Q. With what affections ought this reflection to be accompanied?

A. With three principal ones:—1. Of regret for the past, for having been so far removed from that perfection to which we are obliged, and of which Jesus Christ has given us the example; 2. Of confusion for the present, at the sight of our misery and poverty, blushing with shame before God to see ourselves so much removed from our divine model, and so contrary to what our Lord requires of us; 3. Of desire for the future, desiring ardently to quit this state; and for this we must proceed to the third thing which we have to do in this communion, which is, petition, praying God to grant us such a grace and such a virtue, &c.

Q. With what conditions ought our petition to be accompanied?

A. There are three, particularly humility, confidence, and perseverance.

Q. May we not allege to God, in a loving way, some reasons for which He should be moved to grant us our requests and show us mercy?

A. We can do so, and this practice is very excellent.

Q. What are the chief of these reasons and motives which we can employ?

A. We may, in particular, humbly represent to Him—1. That it is His will; 2. That it will be His glory; 3. That He do not suffer in His Church, which He loves so much, so imperfect a person; 4. That He have a regard that we have communion so often, and that His Son—the amiable object of His complacency, who during His life always sought so faithfully His glory at the expense even of His own, of which He abandoned to Him the care—is so little glorified in us, and so ill received in our heart; 3. Above all, the most efficacious are, to represent to Him His goodness, His infinite generosity, the merits of His Son, His promises and His word in the Scripture.

Q. Is it good to employ the patronage of the Blessed Virgin, our angel guardian, our patrons, and other saints to whom we have a particular devotion, as also of him who has devolved to our lot in the monthly ticket which was given us?

A. Yes, this will be of great service to us, and we ought often to practise it.

Q. May we not also ask for some other virtue besides that on which we make our prayer?

A. We may do so, and it is good to do so, and to petition at this point for all our other wants, those of the Church, and persons for whom we have a particular reason to pray.

Q. After having drawn the Spirit of God and His grace into us, what must we do?

A. As grace does nothing without us, and requires our co-operation, we must pass to the third point of the body of prayer, which is called co-operation.

Q. Why do you call it so?

A. Because at this point, by responding to and co-operating with grace, we make and bring forth resolutions of living for the future conformably with the lights and affections which He has just given us, and we determine on practising them the very same day; for example, such a detachment, such an act, such a virtue, &c.

Q. What next must we do?

A. We must enter upon a great distrust of ourselves, and an entire confidence in Jesus Christ, acknowledging that we cannot accomplish them but in His strength.

Q. What qualities ought these resolutions to possess to be good?

A. They ought to have six chief qualities, they ought to be special, actual, efficacious, humble, full of confidence, and often repeated.

Q. What do you do after having formed your resolutions?

A. I pass on to the third part of prayer, which is the conclusion.

Q. In what does this last part consist?

A. It consists of three things:—1. Of thanking God for having suffered us in His holy presence, and for the graces which He has bestowed on us during prayer; 2. In begging Him to pardon us our faults and negligences during so holy an exercise, and then to beseech Him that He would bless our resolutions that day, during our life, and at our death; 3. In making a spiritual nosegay.

Q. What do you understand by a spiritual nosegay?

A. It is, as St. Francis de Sales says, to take one or two thoughts that have touched us

most during our prayer, and which we believe before God to have been the most useful to us, to think of them often during the day, and which should serve as ejaculatory prayers, to raise us to God and unite us to Him; as we see persons in the world who, being in a beautiful garden well embellished with flowers, do not go out of it until they have gathered one or two flowers, which they smell without ceasing after they have left the garden.

At the end we ought, in saying the *Sub tuum præsidium*, to put all under the protection of the most Blessed Virgin.

SUMMARY.

All the method of prayer may be reduced to these few words:

Preparation—1. Presence of God; 2. Act of contrition; 3. Invocation of the Holy Ghost.

Body of prayer—1. Consideration; 2. Affections and petitions; 3. Entering into oneself, that is to say, reflections on the past, examen of the present, resolution for the future.

Conclusion.—1. Thanksgiving for graces; 2. Offering to God; 3. Prayer to our Lord and to the Blessed Virgin; 4. Choice of a good thought.

THE END.

CATHOLIC THEOLOGICAL UNION

3 0311 00111 7022

BX 2434.4 .L4313 1889
Leguay,
The mistress of novices
instructed in her duties

DEMCO

3 0311 00111 7022